

COMPETENCE AS A PROFESSIONAL IMPERATIVE: DOES THE ARMY
PROMOTE COMPETENCE IN ITS OFFICERS?

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General Studies

by

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ABSTRACT

COMPETENCE AS A PROFESSIONAL IMPERATIVE: DOES THE ARMY PROMOTE COMPETENCE IN ITS OFFICERS? by Major Melanie S. Kirchhoff, 137 pages.

The purpose of this study is an exploration of the Army's promotion of competence in its officers. This was done by a review of Army doctrine and other writings on the Profession of Arms and leadership development and training. Also, a group of senior officers from lieutenant colonels through general officers were interviewed and a group of majors from CGSOC were surveyed to gain insights from experienced officers on the topic of officer competence. Primary results showed an overall emphasis on competence in both the Army as an institution and in Army culture. However, three areas for improvement were also identified. The Army system for counseling, coaching and mentoring needs a major overhaul as its effectiveness in promoting competence and restricting incompetence is poor. Additionally, there is dissent on the inclusion of ethical behavior in the definition of competence, and interpersonal skills are also sidelined or undervalued as an attribute or competency. Further studies on underlying cultural influences on the use of the existing systems of leader development are recommended.

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ACRONYMS

ATLDP	Army Training and Leadership Development Panel
ATRRS	Army Training Requirements and Resource System
BOLC	Basic Officer Leader Course
CGSOC	Command and General Staff Officer Course
MOP	Measure of Performance
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
OCS	Officer Candidate School
OER	Officer Evaluation Report
OES	Officer Education System
OIC	Officer in Charge
ORB	Officer Record Brief
PME	Professional Military Education
PoA	Profession of Arms
POI	Program of Instruction
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
SGM	Sergeant Major
SSGL	Senior Small Group Leader
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
WHINSEC	Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The American soldier is a proud one and he demands professional competence in his leaders. In battle, he wants to know that the job is going to be done right, with no unnecessary casualties. The noncommissioned officer wearing the chevron is supposed to be the best soldier in the platoon and he is supposed to know how to perform all the duties expected of The American soldier expects his sergeant to be able to teach him how to do his job. And he expects even more from his officers.

— GEN Omar Bradley
DA PAM 600-65, 1985

As the Army begins drawing down forces by over 100,000 troops in the next five years, the issue of professional competence as a professional imperative becomes more urgent than in past years. If the systems the Army uses to measure and promote competence work well, then the reduction in force could be a long overdue pruning of an overgrown government agency. However, if the systems are based on faulty thought processes or are inappropriately utilized, our Army senior leaders will miss the opportunity to maintain capability levels through individual human resource choices when maintaining numbers is not an option. Moving forward into the next 15-20 years of strategic planning for the U.S. Army, an emphasis on the competence of individual Soldiers and leaders must be central to the planning process. Summed up neatly in the first chapter of the *Handbook of Competency Mapping*, Seema Sanghi says, “In any business strategy, people are more critical than the plan. Strategies can only be effectively implemented if organizations have a competent force of employees” (2007, 5).

Why Talk About Competence? Three Case Studies

The following case studies are real life stories of officers at different levels of development in their careers. These stories all happened within the year preceding the writing of this thesis.

Case 1: ROTC Cadet

A Professor of Military Science from an ROTC Battalion at a top academic school said recently, “No one thinks they are in the bottom 50 percent.” He was expressing a statistical fact. No matter what level of competence each individual in a given group has compared to a set standard, half must fall below 50 percent on a comparative rating scheme. The context of the conversation was cadet counseling at the end of the semester. The discussion was specifically about a cadet who was failing to meet standards in several areas. This cadet was not just in the bottom 50 percent, she was alienating her peers, below standard in tactical skills and failing her physical training tests. Ethical standards are harder to quantify, but there was no doubt in the minds of her peers and instructors that she was shirking challenging duties with chronic excuses about personal issues. However, her grades were stellar in both her academic major and ROTC. Her annual counseling at the end of her second year stated “fair” on performance and outlined some of the issues. Half way through her third year there was no marked improvement and a discussion with her cadre revealed reticence to take formal action in spite of concerns by her instructor. Yet, she is a high school scholarship winner at a top academic university and is well on her way to earning her commission.

Case 2: Company Commander

“None of his guys were going to stick their necks out for him,” said the battalion commander. This captain was a company commander getting ready to deploy with his unit. Yet, he regularly missed work for personal reasons and had a reputation for working the system for additional time off. He was counseled for inappropriate use of time and resources. He was counseled for failing to respond to requests for information. He failed to complete pre-requisites for his Captain’s Career Course and requested a waiver. Although the waivers are not unusual, he also failed to mention to the administrative staff from which he requested the waiver that he lacked orders and registration in the Army Training Requirements and Resource System (ATRRS). Upon arriving, he failed to attend all required make-up study sessions, but produced evidence that later proved to be false, that he had completed the sessions. As reported by his senior instructor, his performance during the course was dismal: his verbal communication skills were far below standard; his technical knowledge was severely lacking; his military bearing non-existent and his team mates embarrassed during group projects. However, group projects were not graded and written tests were all open book exams. He was counseled verbally and given clear guidance on requirements to attend the follow-on course. Not only did he fail to complete the requirements, he arrived a full day late to the second course. He was counseled in writing and given make-up work for what he missed. At this point, his commander had a detailed packet of negative counseling and initiated processes to have the captain removed from his position only to be met with resistance from higher command. In an ensuing 15-6 investigation for sexual harassment, the captain went directly against orders not to discuss the investigation and held a group meeting of his

non-commissioned officers (NCOs) asking them to declare sworn statements in his favor. Yet, it took eight months of paperwork and fighting on the part of his commander before the captain was relieved of command; after which he moved on to his next unit of assignment with no letter of reprimand or other permanent record of his poor performance or questionable ethics in his personnel file.

Case 3: SSGL PME School

“Students always say that . . . they’re just prudes,” said a senior major when confronted by a peer about sexually inappropriate comments he made in the classroom. He had been an instructor at the schoolhouse for years. At least one other department head had tried reporting the behavior, but the reports went unheeded as the other leader was not in his direct chain of command. All of the subordinate instructors had heard the comments repeatedly over the years and tried to keep him out of the classroom while they were teaching. To make matters worse, students complained every cycle about his poor communication and teaching skills. He was recently promoted into the officer-in-charge position for the teaching team. His subordinates regularly suffered from his sudden outbursts of rage and demands of respect although most of his subordinates were majors and captains. He damaged relationships with other departments in the schoolhouse to the point where those departments quietly instituted internal guidance forbidding the invitation of his team to critical planning sessions. His one saving grace was excellent technical knowledge of his field. Yet, his rater registered surprise when informed of the history of unacceptable behavior. To reduce the possible damaging effects of his well-known incompetency, he was quietly removed from the platform under the guise of cross training another instructor and a new OIC was brought in under the guise of “career

opportunities” for the more junior officer. Yet this major’s Officer Evaluation Reports (OERs) reflect excellent service and capabilities, and the sergeant major (SGM) of the unit clearly expressed his plan to “take care of him until he retires in a couple of years.”

Supporting Questions

The preceding examples will bring nods of understanding and sighs of frustration from any group of Army leaders. Like recent literature on “toxic leaders” it is a topic that is broadly recognized informally in Army circles, but somehow still remains a problem in the daily lives of Army leaders. As a profession on which the nation depends to wield lethal force and use sparingly the lives of its warriors, the Army must recognize competence as a professional imperative in PME and leader development.. Considering the number of documents written on leadership, ethics and technical and tactical training, senior military leaders seem to accept the critical nature of professional competence, but in light of the above case studies among others, does the Army truly promote competence in its officers? The underlying assumption is that Army senior leaders do understand competence to be a professional imperative and the question is whether current Army practices promote competence in its leaders. Because systems are multi-faceted and can include documented processes as well as cultural influences, both subjects must be addressed if practical applications are to be derived from the final analysis. In order to fully address the topic, four other important questions must be answered:

1. Do established leadership development processes provide accurate tools for identifying competence and incompetence?
2. Are those tools used to promote competence?
3. Does the Army reward competence in individual officers?

4. Is officer incompetence tolerated in the Army? If so, why? Is Army culture a factor?

Value Added

A great deal of theoretical work has been done on leadership in general and military leadership specifically. In fact, it has been suggested that the development of individual leadership theory had reached culmination (Wong et al. 2003). Yet, that begs the question of practical application. For over two hundred years, the U.S. Army has developed extensive and detailed training and evaluation processes to instill leadership skills in their officers and non-commissioned officers alike. However, with every generation the success of those programs must be assessed and reaffirmed or reshaped due to cultural and societal changes. In recent years, the Army has focused heavily on developing theory on professionalism and ethics to be incorporated into all levels of training and development of Soldiers and leaders. Also, the concept of Army culture has recently been explored in depth in order to understand and influence the organizational culture of the Army toward the desired professional and ethical behaviors. Less prolifically, there have been studies conducted focusing more directly on future officer competencies at tactical, operational and strategic levels (Department of the Army 2003; Wong et al. 2003). Yet, cultural influences on the practical application of competency training and measures have not been strongly addressed. The purpose of this paper is two-fold: (1) to highlight some strengths and weaknesses of the current Army officer leadership development systems and (2) to show logical connections between Army culture and how it affects the Army's ability to promote competence within the officer ranks.

Assumptions

For the purposes of this paper, it will be assumed that competence is a professional imperative for all members of the Profession of Arms (PoA) as outlined by Colonel (R) Charles Allen in a brief essay titled “Profession of Arms–Starfish Metaphor.” Colonel Allen argues that membership in the Profession of Arms should include the following cohorts: “junior enlisted soldiers and officers, mid-grade leaders, senior leaders, and civilians” who work for the military (Allen 2011). However, most references to tools, processes, and evaluations in this paper will use examples or situations from the officer corps. The research methods within this thesis could be further used to study other cohorts at a later date. This paper will use the term “leader” to refer to Army leaders of all ranks and responsibility levels, but research data is specifically focused on the officer corps.

Definitions

The definition of imperative is “something that is very important and urgent” with the example of “moral/political/economic imperative [equals] something that must be done because it is right” (Macmillan Dictionary). “Right” is a concept that is difficult to define, but in an Army context, it means accomplishing the mission and caring for the Soldiers as in the Army NCO creed, “My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind—accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my Soldiers.” Or more commonly phrased in various army circles, “Mission first, Soldiers always.” Of course, doing what is right must be understood within the context of the Army Values, especially Duty and Integrity. The Army has defined Army Values and the full list is detailed in Appendix A. Duty is defined as the ability to accomplish tasks as part of a

team and avoiding the temptation to take shortcuts in the execution of our obligations. Integrity is doing what is right, legally and morally; as your integrity grows so does the trust others place in you. As stewards of the nation's capability to inflict violence, the idea that ethical behavior ultimately upholds national interests and objectives requires us to perform our duty with integrity and competence. Common sentiment frequently heard among Army personnel reflects the importance and urgency of having competent leaders. Soldiers and leaders alike recognize that competent leaders will achieve mission accomplishment at the best possible cost/benefit ratio. The term "professional imperative" therefore accurately reflects the level of emotional interest (importance) and demand (urgency) for competence discussed in informal Army circles.

The definition of competency for this paper will be "an underlying characteristic related to effective or superior performance." This definition was used by the panel that conducted the Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study (ATLPD) that was published in 2003 (Department of the Army 2003). Subsequent Army studies pertinent to the topic of competency have built on this definition, and it provides a point of continuity for further discussion. For our purposes the word "competence" and "competency" are interchangeable as much of the relevant literature uses them that way.

"Competencies," however, are slightly different and will be defined as "skills, areas of knowledge, attitudes and abilities that distinguish high performers" (Sanghi 2007). Competencies can be measured and related to specific job performance.

"Competent" will be defined as "having the appropriate skills or attributes to perform a given task, and "incompetent" will be defined as "lacking appropriate skills or attributes to perform a given task."

Lastly, the concept of Army culture must be defined and articulated in order to assess its effects on the development and retention of Army officers. Stephen Gerras, Leonard Wong and Charles Allen wrote a highly detailed and well researched paper describing Army culture and offering recommendations for achieving cultural changes. They chose to define Army culture within the larger definition of organizational culture as “the taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations, collective memories and definitions present in an organization” (Gerras, Wong, and Allen 2008). This definition adequately provides a framework for discussion as well as providing continuity of thought as practical applications are considered.

Scope

Competence is a broad topic. Having an end state of competent officers requires that competency be identified, recruited, trained, retained, rewarded and promoted. The established Army doctrine, training, and evaluation systems are extensive and provide a myriad of tools in each facet. Therefore, the discussion of the established Army leadership developmental processes will be a brief overview of Professional Military Education (PME), Officer Evaluation Reporting (OER), promotion board procedures, and counseling, coaching and mentorship as an integrated system the Army uses to identify, develop, evaluate and reward officer competence. More specifically, these tools will be discussed within the framework of leadership development through the trinity of institutional training, operational assignments, and self-development. In this review, each tool will be briefly described and opinions will be gathered from a sample of Army officers about the effectiveness of each tool in identifying and/or promoting competence. However, an in-depth assessment of each tool will not be attempted. Also, a brief look at

how some Fortune 500 companies execute leadership development will offer a comparison of Army methods to corporate America at the highest levels.

Lastly, the topic of incompetence will be addressed. Where is the dividing line between competence and incompetence for military purposes? Do failure and/or ignorance equal incompetence? And most importantly, can the incompetent be trained to achieve competence? Each of these questions may be deserving of an in-depth response beyond the scope of this paper, but a starting point could be established using the responses of senior leaders from the field based on the planned interviews and surveys.

Limitations

Studies using the terminology “culture” in reference to the Army are relatively new and professional instruments to measure cultural variables are not readily available nor perhaps adapted to the military environment. Additionally, new interviews and surveys used will be somewhat open-ended in order to allow expression of related ideas outside of the scope of this paper. Therefore, a certain amount of subjectivity will be used to categorize answers and collected information in paragraph format. Subjective choices made about categorizing answers will be annotated.

Several recent studies and academic papers will be referenced in the exploration of leader competency; however, one excellent and well-written report will be excluded. It is a case study by Jeffrey Weaver called “Comparing Leadership Competencies Among Senior Army Leaders.” This study focuses in depth on competencies that affect short and long term change in organizations (Weaver 2008). Due to the specific focus, the conclusions about competencies that encourage change only become relevant to this paper at the point of recommending organizational changes in the Army to affect better

leader development programs or overall cultural changes. That is beyond the scope of this paper.

Delimitations

The pool of interviewees and survey candidates will be taken from officers in the Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC) course and select other field grade and general officers from the Maneuver Center of Excellence, Fort Benning; the Maneuver Support Center of Excellence, Fort Leonard Wood; and a small selection of officers from other posts. These posts were chosen for their easily accessible locations and for the variety of components, branches, and other demographics available among the officers interviewed and surveyed.

Additionally, it is important to note that the factors affecting leadership and competence in the work force are extremely complex and hotly debated in the academic world as well as in the field. This paper is not intended to be the final word, but a conversation starter about where the U.S. Army finds itself in understanding competence and where there might be areas that need improvement in order to encourage higher levels of competence in its officers. This is especially important in the pursuit of public recognition as a Profession of Arms.

Significance

The ramifications of the answers to the proposed questions could be far-reaching. If established Army leader development systems are significantly behind those in corporate America then changes should be implemented immediately. If both the established leader development systems and Army culture support leader competence,

then the intuitive problem of tolerating incompetence must have another cause yet to be discovered. If the systems are well-designed and comply with current theory, but Army culture circumvents their effectiveness, then the Army must look to deeper organizational changes to affect overall competency levels. In all cases, the Army stands to gain insight and recommendations to form a better Professional of Arms over the next several years.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

History and the Profession of Arms

The problem of competence is not new for the Army. However, in the history of exploring the need for competence, the problem has been built into a myriad of frameworks that present competence as tactical proficiency, leadership skills, and ethical behaviors. Well-thought-out and extensive attempts to consolidate the ideas have often been discussed under the umbrella of the Profession of Arms. LTG John Hackett gave a series of lectures in 1962 briefly addressing the development of professional armies starting with Sparta in the seventh century B.C. and ending with personal experiences in WWII. These lectures were published under the title *The Profession of Arms* in a 1988 reprint of several Center of Military History Publications in order to use them as a textbook for the study of military professionalism at the Air War College. The more recent campaign titled “Profession of Arms,” beginning with the well-known white paper published in 2010 by TRADOC, does not refer directly to the older but similarly titled document. However, there is significant overlap on the themes of the ethical conduct of war as well as the training and expertise required of individual Soldiers and leaders (Hackett 1962; Training and Doctrine Command 2010). The Profession of Arms umbrella does provide an intuitive connection between competence and professionalism. In the recent white paper of 2010, three of the four direct references to competence are coupled with a reference to character noting them as the two qualifying merits for certification as a professional in a military context. However, the thrust of the white paper is focused on themes of ethical behavior as related to the character of Soldiers and leaders and less on

competence; seeming to assume an intuitive understanding of the term as well as an assumption that competence requirements are already being met by other training and doctrine systems. The yet unpublished Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1 “The Army Profession” does have a chapter on military expertise, referring to expertise as a base of knowledge that includes the application of Army land power and other proficiencies. Those proficiencies could easily be categorized as “technical” and “tactical” proficiencies although the latter terms are not used in the publication. Additionally, the new ADRP 1 declares that the Army will certify their professionals based on three criteria, one of which is “competence . . . in expert work” (Department of the Army 2012). The other two criteria are character and commitment. Clearly, the Profession of Arms campaign and doctrine support competence, but solely in the realms of ethics and technical expertise. Although technical expertise is certainly required to be considered “competent,” most literature demands a broader view. Moreover, as the current Profession of Arms doctrine clearly promotes the three certification criteria, it remains to be seen if or how the new doctrine affects the design of PME, OERs and promotion board selections.

Army Doctrine

Leonard Wong aptly stated in his 2003 paper titled “Strategic Leadership Competencies:”

The strategic leadership literature . . . is replete with long lists of the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by strategic leaders of the future. Unfortunately, long comprehensive lists are problematic. At the individual level, it is difficult to assess one’s leadership ability when the lists suggest that a strategic leader must “Be, Know, and Do” just about everything. At the institutional level, the long lists make it difficult to focus an institution’s attention and resources on leader development when the desired endstate is so broad. (Wong et al. 2003)

This was written in 2003, but is just as true today. In 2012, the Army gave us the new ADP and ADRP 6-22, *Army Leadership*. The familiar “Be, Know, Do” was re-organized in the new manuals into the Leadership Requirements Model depicted in the graphic on the following page.

Just as Wong pointed out, the long lists of requirements can be overwhelming and difficult to wade through (Wong et al. 2003). It also appears that while the Army is trying to differentiate between “competency” (an underlying characteristic or attribute) and “competencies” (skills) as defined earlier in this paper, it is important to point out that the leadership model divides the desired characteristics into attributes and competencies. However, some of the attributes in the leadership model can be trained, such as discipline and fitness; whereas others, such as empathy and mental agility are often considered by psychologists to be inborn traits or personality traits that are firmly established in childhood. Additionally, some of the competencies are at best difficult to train and hard to measure, such as building trust and extending influence.

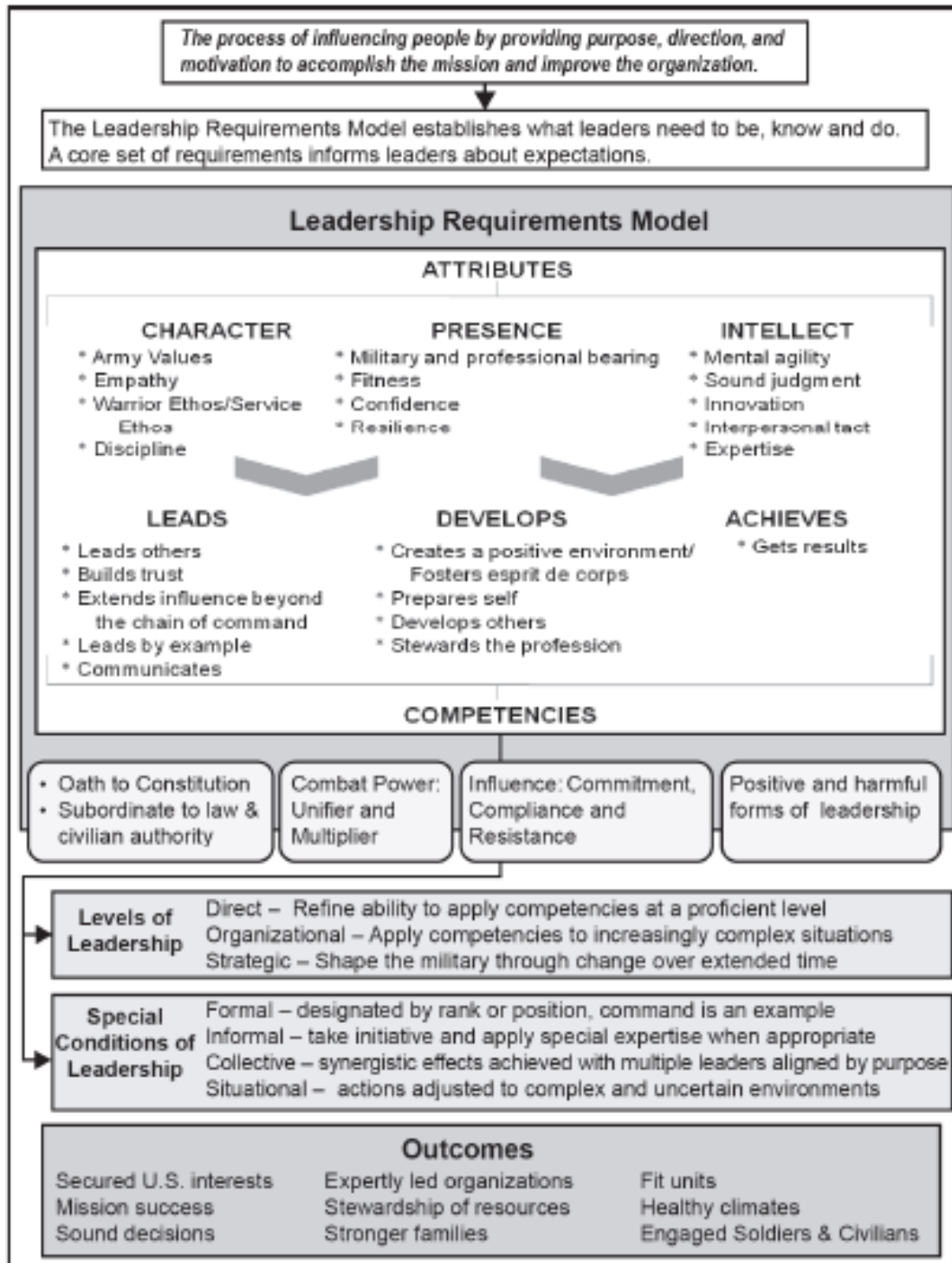


Figure 1. Underlying Logic of Army Leadership

Source: Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), iii.

Certainly, the doctrine provides thorough lists and definitions of the competencies required to be a good leader as well as clarifying expectations of desired outcomes; albeit in lengthy conceptual format. However, the ADP and ADRP 6-22 on leadership are not training manuals. How can leaders gain or improve attributes? Can they be trained? Educated? Developed? The competencies discussed in the doctrine are highly conceptual and hardly refer to specific behaviors or end results that could be measured. Even in the ADRP 7-0, *Training Units and Developing Leaders*, the only concrete idea of how to develop subordinate leaders is listed under section 3-23 “Leader Development Planning.” It states that the plan could “potentially include” items like “leader development objectives in scheduled unit training events.” It makes several suggestions for teaching competencies and measuring progress, but none of them suggest that character attributes are a part of a standard training schedule (Department of the Army 2012, 2-1 to 3-5). Is the leadership doctrine a guide to self-reflection? In that context it appears valuable if leaders carefully analyze their own histories, successes and failings by the provided checklists and definitions. It could be a starting point for self-development or self-improvement. As a checklist for evaluators, it can serve as a reminder when considering a subordinate leader’s strengths and weaknesses, but again, the doctrine does not provide true guidance on how to measure or improve attributes and competencies. On the other hand, senior leaders often have an intuitive sense of the fulfillment of these competencies with which to evaluate their subordinates based on years of experience (Gladwell 2005). The critical question is how do senior leaders help their subordinate leaders recognize and improve deficiencies.

Moreover, it is important to review the language in the doctrine so that all other studies can be related back to what the army teaches about those attributes and competencies. ADRP 6-22 says this about attributes:

Attributes describe the leaders that the Army wants. Attributes describe how an individual behaves and learns within an environment. The leader attributes are character, presence, and intellect. These attributes represent the values and identity of the leader (character) with how the leader is perceived by followers and others (presence), and with the mental and social faculties the leader applies in the act of leading (intellect). Character, a person's moral and ethical qualities, helps a leader determine what is right and gives a leader motivation to do what is appropriate, regardless of the circumstances or consequences. Actions, words, and the manner in which leaders carry themselves convey presence. Presence is not just a matter of showing up; it involves the example that the leader projects to inspire others to do their best and follow their lead. An Army leader's intelligence draws from conceptual abilities and is applied to one's duties and responsibilities. Conceptual abilities enable effective problem-solving and sound judgment. (Department of the Army 2012, 1-5)

Core leader competencies are addressed as follows:

Leader competence develops from a balanced combination of institutional schooling, self-development, realistic training, and professional experience. Building competence follows a systematic and gradual approach, from mastering individual competencies to applying them in concert and tailoring them to the situation at hand. Leading people by giving them a complex task helps them develop the confidence and will to take on progressively more difficult challenges.

Competencies provide a clear and consistent way of conveying expectations for Army leaders. Current and future leaders want to know how to be successful leaders. The core leader competencies apply across all levels of leader positions and throughout careers, providing a good basis for evaluation and focused multisource assessment and feedback. A spectrum of leaders and followers (superiors, subordinates, peers, and mentors) can observe and assess competencies demonstrated through behaviors.

Leader competencies can be developed. Leaders acquire the basic competencies at the direct leadership level. As the leader moves to organizational and strategic level positions, the competencies provide the basis for leading through change. Leaders continuously refine and extend the ability to perform these competencies proficiently and learn to apply them to increasingly complex situations.

Performing missions develops, sustains, and improves these competencies. Leaders do not wait until deployments to develop their leader competencies. They use every training opportunity to assess and improve their ability to lead.

To improve their proficiency, Army leaders can take advantage of chances to learn and gain experience in the leader competencies. They should look for new learning opportunities, ask questions, seek training opportunities, conduct self-assessments, and request performance critiques. This lifelong approach to learning ensures leaders remain viable as professionals. (Department of the Army 2012, 1-5 to 1-6)

Be, Know, Do

For many years the Army leadership paradigm was “Be, Know, Do.” This paradigm was outlined in detail in the FM 22-100. Figure 2 depicts a representation of the key points from the field manual (Department of the Army 1999). The new ADP and ADRP 6-22 does not use this model and has switched to the aforementioned Leadership Requirements Model (figure 1). However, the change is recent enough that much of the current literature still refers to the “Be, Know, Do” model. After a careful comparison of attributes and competencies mentioned in both models, the desired characteristics remain the same although the way the information is organized has changed.

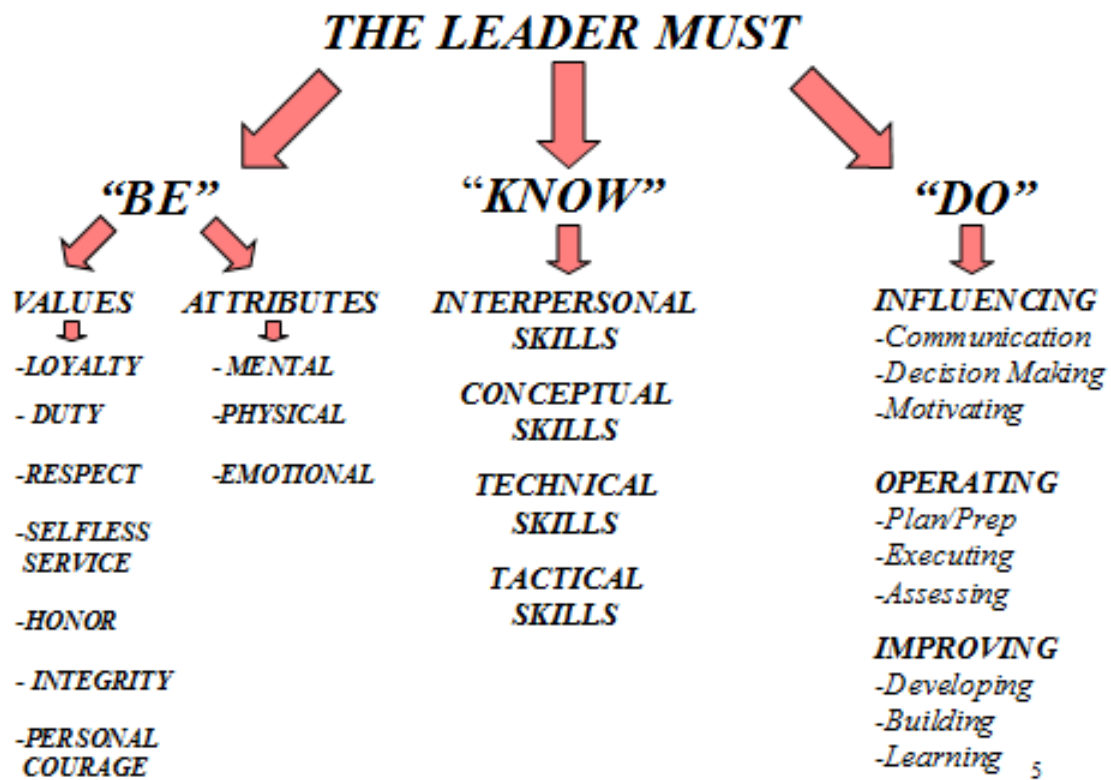


Figure 2. Be Know Do Leadership Model

Source: Created by author using Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 22-100, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1999), 1-6.

Moreover, in the last ten years, several important documents have been written to help answer the question, “What do future Army leaders need to be successful?” Some of those documents view character qualities and ethics as the main area of growth for Army leaders. For example, Don Snider’s new book, *The Warrior’s Character* that was written in a similar vein as his previous title *Forging a Warrior’s Character*. Both books point to the foundation of competence being grounded in the moral character of leaders (Snider, 2012). Other writings attempted to redefine leader competencies at strategic and

operational levels in order to better focus the lengthy and somewhat cumbersome lists of attributes, qualities, skills, and competencies that Army doctrine uses today. Still others recommended specific changes in doctrine or policy that would break long time traditions that prevent appreciation and promotion of quality leaders who do not fit a traditional mold. Some of these studies and documents pre-date the war in Afghanistan, but still provide valuable insight. Others were developed in the midst of our recent war period using some accumulated lessons learned from our combat experiences.

In *The Warrior's Character*, Patrick Sweeney and Sean Hannah define leader competence as “Entail[ing] technical and tactical knowledge, intelligence, decision-making skills, and interpersonal social skills.” They define leader character as, “The combination of values and attributes that define who the leader is as a person.” They go on to say that “Be” refers to the strength of a leader’s character; “Know” is the extent of their competence; and “Do” refers to a “cooperative and interdependent relationship with followers through leader behaviors” (Snider 2013, 144). Those categories correlate well with an intuitive understanding of the concepts, but with the new leadership model, the individual attributes and competencies do not match up neatly with Sweeney’s description. For example, expertise is under character attributes. That is not a moral character attribute as implied by Sweeney’s description. Sweeney says “Know” is the extent of competence, but many of the items in the new leadership model do not fit neatly in the category of “know[ing].” Also, most of the items on the new competencies list (see figure 1.) seem to intuitively fit there, but several of the items listed under attributes also seem more like “extent of competency” for example: fitness or sound judgment. Lastly, according to Sweeney, “Do” is directly related to actions by leaders that build productive

relationships with followers. The items related to this category on the new model are under “Leads” and “Develops” (ADRP 6-22). Sweeny and Hannah’s ideas of character and competence (Be and Know) are better reflected in the new ADRP 1 under the Professional Certification Criteria: Competence, Character, and Commitment (known commonly as the three C’s). See figure 3 for more details.

In 2000 and 2001, General Shinseki, the Army Chief of Staff at the time, asked two bodies of researchers to study and report on needed leadership competencies for the future success of the Army. Both reports were compiled and published in 2003. One was the “Army Training and Leader Development Panel Officer Study” and the other was titled “Strategic Leadership Competencies.” Essentially, the difference was the level of leadership focus. The ATLDP focused on operational and tactical needs, and the Strategic Leadership Competencies focused on strategic needs. The latter defined “strategic” as “a way of thinking . . . [for leaders] who have increased responsibility for an organization, who are concerned with internal as well as external spheres of influence, and who are surrounded by ambiguity and complexity” (Wong et al. 2003). The reference to “increased responsibility” seems to be directed at Army Colonels who have increased responsibility within their organizations for the strategic consequences of their decisions and actions. This definition was intended to include all Army Colonels as well as General Officers due to the changing operational environment that requires more strategic thinking at lower levels.

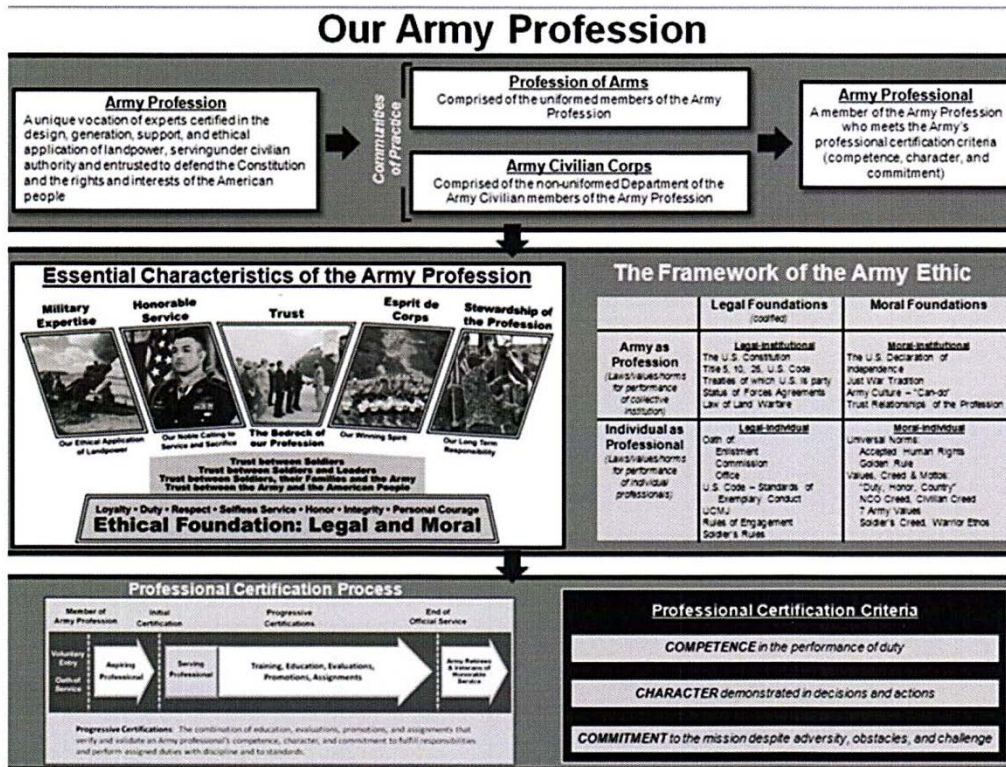


Figure 3. Our Army Profession

Source: Department of the Army, Army Doctrine and Training Publication (ADRP) 1, *The Army Profession* (initial draft) (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), v.

The ATLDP mixed and matched terms from the Army leadership model. They defined competency as “an underlying characteristic related to effective or superior performance.” This definition equates with many business models and academic writings and clearly uses “characteristic” as part of the definition. This should not be confused with the Army concept of “character” meaning a leader’s moral and ethical makeup that falls under “attributes” on the leadership model. The ATLDP concluded that the Army has values-based, research-based and strategy-based leadership competencies. Although not stated specifically, the values-based competencies may be linked to the well-known

Army Values. The research-based competencies are not clearly linked to specific items on the leadership model, but the ATLDP does state that the other “remaining skills, knowledge and attributes” were derived from analyzing the performance of successful leaders. Lastly, the strategic competencies are derived from the Army’s strategic direction. The panel concluded “that given the ambiguous nature of the Objective Force’s operational environment, Army leaders should focus on developing the ‘enduring competencies’ of self-awareness and adaptability” (Department of the Army 2003). Going back to the “Be, Know, Do” model, the enduring competencies seem to be little more than the addition of two items to an already long list of attributes Army Officers must have and fall under the “Be” section of attributes. However, the study had several relevant observations and conclusions about Army culture and leader competency development such as “the leader development aspects of the OER are seldom used and senior raters seldom counsel subordinates” (Department of the Army 2003) that will be addressed further when research data is reviewed.

The “Strategic Leadership Competencies” study analyzed Army and academic literature, future needs of the Army, the Army leader development system and views of key leader developers in order to present the Army with “strategic leadership competencies” and recommendations for instilling attributes and training on competencies. As noted earlier, the authors recognized that lengthy lists of “knowledge, skills, and abilities” are “problematic.” Therefore they set themselves the task of “identifying the competencies of future strategic leaders [and] reducing the lists to a few meta-competencies that would prove useful in: a) directing leader development efforts in the process of producing leaders with strategic leader capability, and b) facilitating self-

assessment by officers of their strategic leader capability.” After careful distillation of all current Army doctrine on leadership and a thorough review of projected strategic leadership needs for the future, Wong and his associates derived six meta-competencies: identity, mental agility, cross-cultural savvy, interpersonal maturity, world-class warrior and professional astuteness (Wong et al. 2003). It is beyond the scope of this paper to do a thorough review of their evidence. Suffice to say that the conclusions were well supported by academic study and intuitively make sense. Additionally, many of their conclusions and recommendations overlapped those of the ATLDP. The insights from both studies will be used throughout this investigation and revisited in the conclusions in chapter 5 of this study.

Leadership Development in Fortune 500 Companies

Army outcomes are sometimes harder to evaluate than corporate outcomes. When the bottom line is money, success is easier to measure than when the bottom line is something as complicated as combat performance. Because many leadership competencies cross industry lines, the Army looks to current trends and successful leadership programs in corporate America for measures of performance (MOPs) and fresh ideas on leader development. The U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences recently published an in-depth look at top performing companies in America and their leadership development programs in a paper titled “Leadership Development: a Review of Industry Best Practices” (Day and Halpin 2001). The authors presented a short list of “best practices” from top companies like General Electric and PepsiCo. The list included:

1. Formal Development Programs
2. 360° feedback
3. Executive Coaching
4. Job Assignments
5. Mentoring
6. Networking
7. Reflection
8. Action Learning
9. Outdoor challenges (Day and Halpin 2001)

Day and Halpin also created a comprehensive list of several top companies' leader competencies. The following examples clearly show that those companies are training and recruiting the same general competencies as the Army, minus specific technical and tactical skills:

1. American Express: Quality, Customers/Clients, Teamwork, Integrity, People
2. AT&T: Thinks Strategically, Learns Continuously, Inspires a Shared Purpose, Creates a Climate for Success, Seizes Opportunities, Transforms Strategy into Results, Builds Partnerships, Leverages Disagreements
3. Chase Manhattan Bank: Sets Strategic Vision and Direction, Manages Complexity, Drives for Results, Champions Change, Leads with Confidence, Builds High-performance Organizations, Builds Partnerships with Customers and Colleagues, Promotes Shared Values
4. Corning: Empowering, Networking, Accurate Self-assessment

5. Federal Express: Charismatic Leadership, Individual Consideration, Intellectual Stimulation, Courage, Dependability, Flexibility, Integrity, Judgment, Respect for Others
6. National Australia Bank: Flexible and Adaptable, Committed to Making a Difference, Communicates with Impact, Clear Service Orientation, Strong Self-regard, Acts with Integrity, and Brings out the Best in People (Day and Halpin 2001)

A detailed comparison of Army implementation of each “best practice” as compared to, say, General Electric’s, is not feasible for the purposes of this paper. However, each of the preceding “best practices” will be presented in light of established Army leadership development programs for a general comparison with Army current practices.

Army Culture

What does Army culture have to do with competency? Colonel (Ret.) Charles D. Allen recently pointed out that since 1978 our Chiefs of Staff of the Army have annually produced white papers and campaigns to “redress the shortfalls in the Army and to ‘professionalize’ the force.” He goes on to say that in spite of such efforts, events like Abu Ghraib and high suicide rates over the last ten years have caused “the competency of our force and its leaders [to be] questioned” (Allen 2011). At this writing, a just-published article by Thomas Ricks, a Pulitzer Prize winning author who is a Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security, states,

The Army’s leadership ranks have become populated by mediocre officers, placed in positions where they are likely to fail. Success goes unrewarded, and everything but the most extreme failures goes unpunished, creating a perverse incentive system that drives leaders toward a risk-adverse middle where they are more likely to find stalemate than victory. (Ricks 2012)

Returning to the recent white paper on the Army Profession of Arms, the authors recognize that there must be a balance between the Army's "culture and climate and its institutional practices" (Training and Doctrine Command 2010). However, the relationship as presented in the paper only states that the implementation of the established institutional systems (leadership development systems) can affect culture and climate (Training and Doctrine Command 2010). It fails to address the reverse relationship of how culture affects the way the systems are implemented.

An additional study gave empirical evidence that current Army culture is not characterized by many of the qualities necessary to inculcate competence in its future leaders (Pierce 2010). The study is entitled "Is the Organizational Culture of the U.S. Army Congruent with the Professional Development of Its Senior Level Officer Corps?" and states:

At the macro level the results of [this] research strongly suggest a significant lack of congruence between the U.S. Army's organizational culture and the results of its professional development programs for its future strategic leaders. [Dr. Pierce] bases his conclusion on empirical data that indicate that the future strategic leaders of the army believe that they operate on a day-to-day basis in an organization whose culture is characterized by:

- An overarching desire for stability and control
- Formal rules and policies
- Coordination and efficiency
- Goal and results oriented
- Hard-driving competitiveness

However, sharply highlighting a pronounced lack of congruence between what they believe the Army's culture to be and what it should be (based on their development as future strategic leaders), the respondents also indicated that the Army's culture should be that of a profession, which emphasizes:

- Flexibility and discretion
- Participation
- Human resource development

- Innovation and creativity
- Risk taking
- Long-term emphasis on professional growth
- Acquisition of new professional knowledge and skills (Pierce 2010)

Organizational culture and Army culture within that context is defined as “the taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, expectations, collective memories and definitions present in an organization” (Gerras, Wong, and Allen 2008). These cultural foundations may be buried beneath the surface and manifest themselves in visible behaviors. In the Army, the declared professional norms espoused in the Profession of Arms doctrine and the Army Leadership doctrine clearly state that leaders must value and emulate an extensive list of attributes encompassing the Army Values among other things. But do the visible behaviors of Army leaders match the declared norms? The difference between espoused values and actual values that affect behavior is commonly referred to as the difference between espoused values and “theories-in-use” (Pierce 2010; Argyris and Schon 1974). Espoused values are those that are outwardly held or declared. A primary example is the list of Army Values. Soldiers and leaders in the Army are expected to internalize and act in accordance with the Army Values. They are published and verbally espoused but can only be measured or seen by external behaviors. If these behaviors are not consistent with espoused values or norms they point to conflicting beliefs called “theories-in-use,” but sometimes the deeper underlying beliefs or assumptions that cause the conflicting behaviors are hard to pinpoint (Schein 1990). Referring back to the conclusions of the Pierce study, the current Army cultural norms may predict some unwanted behaviors that are inconsistent with our espoused values and desires for competence, regardless of the way the specific competencies are defined. For

example, if Army culture is short term results-oriented and risk-adverse, that may affect a junior leader's willingness to voice concerns to his superior. It may affect a senior leader's willingness to correct incompetent behavior in a subordinate? Further discussion of the effects of Army culture on competence issues in relation to survey and interview data chapters 4 and 5 of this paper.

In a recent and defining work on Army culture, Gerras, Wong, and Allen designed an ingenious hybrid model of organizational culture for the Army. However, the purpose of their study was not to do a full assessment of Army culture, but to design the model and discuss methods by which Army culture could be changed. Some of the key cultural qualities they acknowledged can be further addressed in the context of promoting competence. Those qualities are:

1. Performance orientation—the extent to which an organization encourages innovation, high standards, and performance improvement
2. Assertiveness—the extent to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in relationships with others
3. Future orientation—the extent to which planning and investing in the future are rewarded
4. Power distance—the degree to which members of the organization accepts authority, power differences, and status privileges
5. Uncertainty avoidance—the degree to which an organization relies on social norms, rules and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events

(Gerras, Wong, and Allen 2008)

Gerras did not provide full analysis on each of these qualities but the information they provided, as well as some information extrapolated from new interviews and surveys, may help determine where to focus new studies on where Army culture stands on each of these qualities as well as the effects on developing leader competence.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Method

Leadership development tools and processes to include PME, OERs, promotion selection boards, counseling, coaching and mentoring will be assessed against opinions and personal experiences of a sampling of Army Officers from the ranks of Major through Brigadier General in order to answer the questions: (1) Do established leadership development processes provide accurate tools for identifying competence and incompetence? (2) Are those tools used to promote competence? (3) Does the Army reward competence in individual officers? (4) Is officer incompetence tolerated in the Army? If so, why? Is Army culture a factor?

This will be accomplished through a series of interviews and surveys structured to focus on the following topics:

1. What makes an officer competent?
2. How do you know if an officer is incompetent?
3. Does the Army culture overlook identifying incompetent officers?
4. Does Army culture discourage documenting an officer's incompetence?
5. What should be done once an incompetent officer is identified?
6. Does the Army tolerate incompetent officers?
7. How can that be reduced?
8. How important is mentorship in developing competent officers?
9. How important is the OER system in developing competent officers?
10. How is the OER system used to identify incompetent officers?

11. How important is PME in developing competent officers?

12. How can the Army improve officer competence?

Surveys and interviews will be conducted within a variety of branches ensuring that there is also an appropriate level of gender and race differences. Majors from CGSOC will complete surveys. Lieutenant Colonels, Colonels, and three General officers will be interviewed from a variety of backgrounds and locations. Survey questions will be designed to address both leadership development systems as doctrinally established as well as cultural influences on the application of those systems.

Data from the previously mentioned studies on leader development systems and cultural influences will be included with current data in drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

Finally, each of the case studies presented at the beginning of this paper will be re-examined in light of leadership development systems and cultural norms. Specific strengths and weaknesses in each case will be addressed. Also, the use of leadership development tools used in each case will be examined. Last, conclusions will be compared to the real life case studies as a “common sense test” for applicability.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Brief Overview of Professional Military Education for Officers

Professional Military Education (PME) is the term for all institutional learning in the Army. The primary schools for officers are referred to as the Officer Education System (OES). This includes pre-commissioning schooling such as military academies, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and Officer Candidate School (OCS) as well as Basic Officer Leader Course (BOLC), Captains Career Course (CCC), Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC) and the Senior Service College. Pre-commissioning courses teach basic soldier skills and knowledge, leadership theory and practice, physical fitness, military history, written and verbal communication and an overview of the Profession of Arms. BOLC continues to teach platoon level leadership skills and begins instruction on branch specific technical and tactical skills. The CCC prepares captains for company command and brigade staff level tasks and further solidifies technical skills for the appropriate branch. CGSOC prepares majors for battalion command as well as staff officer positions at field grade level. The purpose of the Senior Service College is to produce lieutenant colonels and colonels who are skilled critical thinkers and complex problem solvers in the global application of land power.

Since the publication of the last ATLDP Officer Study in 2003, many of the recommendations made in that study have been implemented into OES. Having discerned that the Army depends on leaders who are self-aware and adaptable in order to achieve success in executing full spectrum operations (now termed Unified Land Operations), all

OESs are emphasizing those traits in their training. Personality inventories and other self-awareness tools are used to provide insight to the students on their leadership styles, strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, the idea of being flexible and adaptable is often discussed in connection with planning cycles and case studies. However, self-awareness and adaptability remain difficult to assess in students except by subjective observations of instructors or advisors. Other conclusions of the ADTLP were that OES did not sufficiently teach the combat support and combat service support officers the basic combat skills necessary to lead and protect their units in unified land operations nor does OES support the skills to build and bond with teams quickly as is required in unified land operations. Naturally, team building is taught and encouraged at all levels of OES. However, it is unfortunate that the panel for the ADTLP relegated these requirements to the arena of the institutional training domain when perhaps they are better suited to home station training or development under the watchful eye of a coach or mentor in the operational domain. This would depend on the proper coaching being is available in the operational domain which from the data gathered is in question. Lastly, it was noted that “the Army’s most experienced instructors teach the most experienced students (e.g., Senior Service College) while less experienced instructors teach the least experienced students (e.g., OBC). (Senior Service College refers to the War College and all military education level 1.) It is true that Army instructors at OESs typically have the same or only slightly higher rank structure than the students at that course. However, senior instructors and civilians are often higher in rank or retired from the military. Unfortunately, instructors at the schools are assigned the same way everything else is in the Army: put faces in spaces. Therefore, neither the abilities of an individual instructor

to teach and coach nor the desire to coach and train others is taken into consideration when assignments are made. It follows that, the quality of coaching and instruction varies greatly from instructor to instructor, especially when it comes to teaching or coaching on some of the more nebulous qualities like “adaptability” that the Army deems a critical competency.

Brief Overview of the Officer Evaluation Report

The Army Officer Evaluation Report (OER) (Appendix B) is an annual evaluation report that details an officer’s performance in regards to the Army Values (Appendix A), leader attributes, skills and actions (related to the “Be, Know, Do” leadership model), and potential for promotion. It underwent some changes in 2011 and more are planned for December 2013 (Appendix B, New OER form O1-O7). The following excerpt from public affairs guidance to the pentagon neatly summarizes the changes that have already been instituted and reasons for those changes:

The changes include: reinstating senior rater box check for company grade officers, senior rater successive assignments recommendations, incorporating a statement on the OER if the rated officer has completed or initiated a Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback/360 (MSAF) within the last three years, and a reduction in short-term evaluations. Additionally, the OER support form will be optional.

Adjustments are necessary as one of the key components in supporting the transition of the Army after 10 years of war and to align performance evaluation with the Army’s current leadership doctrine. As a result of these factors, we must ensure our Evaluation Reporting System remains an integral enabler of the Army’s leader development strategy, more accurately evaluates performance and potential, increases accountability, and better informs a transparent leader development and talent management process. (Officer Evaluation Report Form Policy Revision, 2011)

The additional changes due at the end of this year are much more dramatic. The new form will come in three different versions: one for lieutenants and captains, one for

field grade officers and a third for colonels and brigadier generals. The new form does not have the 16 boxes for “attributes, skills and actions.” Instead the form requires raters to be more descriptive and give statements about an officer’s attributes, specifically asking for feedback on “character, presence and intellect.” Additionally, comments will be required concerning how the officer “leads, develops and achieves.” Moreover, raters will only be able to give top block to less than 50 percent of their rated officers and senior raters will have a “top 10 percent” block and a “most qualified” block of which the sum can only be 49 percent of their rated officers. Lastly, the new OERs will ask raters to recommend not only operational assignments but broadening assignments such as interagency positions. According to George Piccirilli, chief of the evaluations, Selections and Promotions Division at Human Resources Command, the goal is for assignments officers to use the OER to “make sure we put the right quality into the right job” (Sheftick 2012).

The ATLDP clearly states that the OER has two purposes: leader development and personnel management support. It goes on to say, “The OER is not yet meeting officer expectations as a leader development tool. The leader development aspects of the OER are seldom used, and senior raters seldom counsel subordinates” (Training and Doctrine Command 2010). As seen below in the interviews on this topic, some senior leaders believe that the OER can be used developmentally for subordinate leaders, but not without the appropriate regular counseling. However, most respondents felt strongly that the OER is useful strictly as an evaluation tool and not as a developmental tool. Therefore, the OER is helpful in identifying competence levels for promotion boards, but

not in increasing competence levels in individual officers because it is not used as an integral part of a counseling and developmental tool.

A Brief Overview of Army Counseling, Coaching and Mentoring

The Army has a system to encourage developmental counseling of subordinates by raters and senior raters. The Department of the Army form 4856 (Appendix C) is well known by all Army personnel and its use is taught at entry levels for officers and NCOs. Commanders and supervisors are mandated to perform quarterly counseling on their subordinates' performance in their job duties. Additionally, the counseling form can be used outside of the scheduled quarterly counseling to document a failure to fulfill an expectation or any other behavior or action the rater feels is necessary.

The ADRP 6-22 says this about counseling:

Counseling is central to leader development. Leaders who serve as designated raters have to prepare their subordinates to be better Soldiers or Army Civilians. Good counseling focuses on the subordinate's performance and issues with an eye toward tomorrow's plans and solutions. Leaders expect subordinates to be active participants seeking constructive feedback. Counseling cannot be an occasional event but should be part of a comprehensive program to develop subordinates. With effective counseling, no evaluation report—positive or negative—should be a surprise. A consistent counseling program includes all subordinates, not just the people thought to have the most potential.

Counseling is the process used by leaders to guide subordinates to improve performance and develop their potential. Subordinates are active participants in the counseling process. Counseling uses a standard format to help mentally organize and isolate relevant issues before, during, and after the counseling session. During counseling, leaders help subordinates to identify strengths and weaknesses and create plans of action. To make the plans work, leaders actively support their subordinates throughout the implementation and assessment processes. Subordinates invest themselves in the process by being forthright in their willingness to improve and being candid in their assessment and goal setting. (Department of the Army 2012, 7-10)

Unfortunately, it is widely known that formal quarterly counseling rarely happens as required. This was documented in the 2003 ATLDP and supported by the data gathered in this investigation. Moreover, even when it does happen, there is often little provided in the way of a developmental plan and seldom appropriate follow-up. Furthermore, informal or verbal counseling often takes the place of more formal counseling which neither allows for a well-developed follow-up plan nor provides documentation of improvement or failure. These commonly held perspectives were upheld by the senior leaders interviewed for this paper.

Mentorship is related to counseling in the sense that both are intended to be subjective and require personal involvement in the development of a younger officer. Generally, mentorship is understood to be a learning or networking relationship developed between a higher ranking officer and a lower ranking one. They are not necessarily in the same chain of command. Often the relationship is driven by the younger officer who is looking for the opportunity to learn from the experiences of the older officer or looking for career opportunities that the older may have access to. Many officers talk about valuable insights and guidance from mentors they have had, but others say they have never had that kind of relationship within the Army. The Army does not have a formal mentorship program of any kind.

ADRP 6-22 says this about mentoring:

Mentorship is the voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect (AR 600-100). Mentorship is generally characterized by the following—

- Mentoring takes place when the mentor provides a less experienced leader with advice and counsel over time to help with professional and personal growth.

- The developing leader often initiates the relationship and seeks counsel from the mentor. The mentor takes the initiative to check on the well-being and development of that person.
- Mentorship affects personal development (maturity and interpersonal and communication skills) as well as professional development (technical, tactical, and career path knowledge).
- Mentorship helps the Army maintain a highly competent set of leaders.
- The strength of the mentoring relationship relies on mutual trust and respect. Protégés carefully consider assessment, feedback, and guidance; these become valuable for growth to occur. (Department of the Army 2012, 7-11 to 7-12)

Coaching is the least talked about of the developmental actions. ADRP 6-22 has a detailed guideline for coaches on how to do coaching and describes coaching like this:

While a mentor or counselor generally has more experience than the person being supported does, coaching relies primarily on teaching and guiding to bring out and enhance the capabilities already present. Coaching refers to the function of helping someone through a set of tasks or with general qualities. Those being coached may, or may not, have appreciated their potential. The coach helps them understand their current level of performance and guides them how to reach the next level of knowledge and skill.

Coaching is a development technique used for a skill, task, or specific behaviors. Coaches should possess considerable knowledge in the area in which they coach others. (Department of the Army 2012, 7-10 to 7-11)

This guidance is for leaders to develop their own subordinates; however, there is also a coaching program available within the 360 feedback program. Once an officer or other soldier has done a 360 assessment, he can request a coaching session with a trained coach to review the results and discuss an individual development plan to address areas for improvement.

Coaching and mentoring is critical to the development of competence in any profession. In this aspect, the Army is failing to prioritize the formal counseling program it has and as a culture is failing to encourage more mentorship and coaching on an informal basis. There is evidence that this is related to our risk-adverse and micro-

management characterized culture (Department of the Army 2003). The 360 feedback program does encourage self-analysis and is an excellent tool for increasing competence if used appropriately. However, since the only accountability in this system is whether it has been initiated and the percentage of officers who take advantage of the coaching is small,¹ the contribution of the 360 program to overall competence is minimal even if some individuals use it effectively.

A Brief Overview of Promotion Board Process

The Army has an “up or out” system of promotions. This means that officers are considered twice for the next rank within a set amount of time. With few exceptions, if they are not chosen for promotion, they are dismissed from the Army ranks. Additionally, the promotions available are a pyramid from the need for thousands of lieutenants to fewer captains and fewer yet majors, etc. If they have 20 years of service, they can retire. Otherwise, they simply transition to the civilian work force like any other job change. Of course, some officers transition from the Army of their own accord for other job opportunities but many aspire to a 20 year plus career and anxiously await promotion board results.

As for the process, a board of higher ranking officers is convened to review promotion packets of the appropriate year group officers who are available for promotion. The board must scan hundreds or thousands (depending on the rank being evaluated) of packets within a four week period. For the most part, this allows only seconds to view an individual packet. The board is given guidance issued by the

¹According to one of the interviewees who held a position within the 360 coaching program.

Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff on the total number of promotions and how many each branch will be awarded. This guidance is based on an analysis of the needs of each branch and the funding allocated for personnel pay and benefits. The president of the board is expected to execute according to that guidance. Promotion packets include all OERs, AERs, the officer's ORB or 2-1 (similar to an ORB and used by the Army Reserves), an official DA photo, and proof of education and awards. Of course, the board is also given a specific number of officers to promote based on Army needs. Generally, a top performer is fairly easy to distinguish by a history of top block OERs and those packets go into a "definitely promote" stack. Then a further review is done to determine the better of the remaining packets. This process requires a bit more time and a closer look at packets with more average performance on OERs. At this point, the process becomes highly subjective to the interpretation of the available documentation and how it measures against the desired promotion guidance.

Additionally, according to the senior leaders interviewed, it is common knowledge that certain kinds of language on OERs distinguishes an excellent performer from a good performer even if the officers were all given center mass ratings from senior raters or top block ratings from primary raters. Also, it is worth noting that in the last several years the Army has needed more officers than were available for promotion and promotion rates have been close to 100 percent at all levels through colonel. For example, the average promotion rate for lieutenant colonels was 94 percent between 2001 and 2011 (Tice 2012). Obviously, if the promotion rate approached 100 percent, there was little culling of the force during this time period. Competence levels were identified adequately, but hardly mattered in the promotion process. Thus, promotion boards have not supported or

rewarded higher levels of competence through no fault of the process during this time of elevated need. However, with tighter criteria in future boards, it will once again be a culling process that focuses tightly on competence, past performance, and future potential of the officers being considered for promotion which will increase the overall level of competence in officers as a group.

Senior Leader Interviews

The pool of senior leader interviewees consisted of ten senior leaders from Lieutenant Colonel through Major General. The experiences of the group as a whole include battalion through division command as well as leadership positions in a wide variety of military learning institutions. The following table gives the breakdown of rank, branch, gender and component.

Table 1. Interviewee Demographics

	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Branch</i>	<i>Component</i>	<i>Gender</i>
1	Major General	Infantry	Active	Male
2	Major General	Infantry	National Guard	Male
3	Brigadier General	Chemical	Active	Female
4	Colonel	Infantry	Active	Male
5	Colonel	Infantry	Reserve	Male
6	Colonel	Chemical	Active	Male
7	Colonel	Engineer	National Guard	Male
8	Colonel	Chemical	Active	Male
9	Lieutenant Colonel	Chemical	Active	Male
10	Lieutenant Colonel	Engineer	Active	Male

Source: Created by author.

Interview Summary

The following questions were given to the interviewees before the interview and the agenda was followed in a loose and open format to allow sentiment outside of the stated questions to be explored. The answers followed common themes among the officers interviewed. Their responses are summarized below.

What makes an officer competent?

Every officer immediately mentioned technical and tactical skills as a requirement for competency. The other components of competence were discussed using a wide variety of terms: good judgment, character, communication skills, perseverance, commitment, relationship skills, influence techniques, emotional quotient, emotional intelligence, management of complex systems, social skills, interpersonal skills, adaptability, sincere concern for others and ethical or moral behavior.² Another common understanding of officer competence was the ability to train, lead and inspire soldiers on the mission requirements and maintain the unit equipment needed to accomplish the mission. However, the senior officers were sharply divided on whether ethical behavior was a part of competence or something else entirely. Six officers considered ethical considerations to be strongly tied to competence, but the other four felt that ethical considerations are a separate developmental issue from competence although required in a professional officer's character.

²In order to facilitate ease of discussion, the various terms used by respondents for competencies will be distilled down to technical proficiency, tactical proficiency, leadership ability, interpersonal skills, self-awareness, and ethical behavior.

It is important to note that while a small selection of the respondents did not feel that interpersonal skills (or “social skills” or “relationship skills”) were critical to competence, they all felt that the ability to communicate a vision was critical as was the ability to influence others (i.e. inspire subordinates, coordinate effectively with peers or outside organizations, and manage dignitaries or superiors with some finesse). Some related interpersonal skills as being contrary to the spitfire personalities of some good Army leaders but they were quick to point out that those leaders still had to sincerely care about and gain the confidence of their subordinates.

How do you know if an officer is incompetent?

Among the senior leaders, there was a general consensus that if an officer was severely lacking in any of the primary areas outlined above: tactical proficiency, technical proficiency, leadership, intellectual capacity, good judgment, interpersonal skills, self-awareness and ethics (when ethics was included by the interviewee as an area of competence) then that officer was incompetent. Stated differently, it was generally agreed that all of those areas were critical in order for an officer to be competent due to the variety and complexity of most officer assignments. It was also mentioned that the Army has no real focus on identifying incompetence. The focus is on determining the best and brightest with an assumption that anyone incompetent will be weeded out at the point of promotion through the normal system of evaluations. Additionally, it was pointed out that failure at a particular job position or task did not necessarily equate with incompetence nor does ignorance equate incompetence if that officer has not had the opportunity to learn the requirements for a position or task. Most importantly, there was general consensus that the required competencies could be trained with the possible

exceptions of intellectual capacity and interpersonal skills. However, respondents felt that a minimum standard for intellectual capacity can be assumed since all Army officers have a college degree.

Does the Army culture overlook identifying
incompetent officers?

All of the interviewees agreed that incompetent officers have often been allowed to remain in the Army and have been promoted. Some have even been promoted to the rank of General Officer. However, two of the respondents felt that the word culture inaccurately assigned culpability because the responsibility to counsel, train and/or relieve a given officer is squarely in the hands of the supervisor. Six respondents felt that incompetent officers are accurately identified by senior leaders and supervisors, but that there are substantial obstacles to removing an incompetent officer from his job or from the Army entirely. The remaining two respondents emphatically answered “yes” to the question as stated. Many respondents alluded to the operational tempo as a primary culprit for recent tolerance of incompetence because promotion rates have been close to 100 percent for so many years. One respondent said that while he understood the need to fill the positions, it would be best to assume some risk by leaving less vital positions empty in lieu of giving a supervisor an incompetent subordinate who takes up 80 percent of the supervisor’s time to develop that subordinate and/or supervise that individual’s work.

Does Army culture discourage documenting
an officer's incompetence?

This question was closely tied into the above answers. The same officers tying personal responsibility to the direct supervisor for overlooking incompetence also refuted the tie to Army culture in this question, but still agreed that incompetence is seldom documented. The other eight respondents answered “yes” to the question. All respondents went on to talk about the obstacles to documenting incompetence. All agreed that factors such as limited time and rapidly changing commands could contribute to lack of documentation, but strongly agreed that the biggest obstacles were the unwillingness or inability of many immediate supervisors to speak honestly and frankly about their subordinates' weaknesses or failings directly to their subordinates. Some respondents also pointed out that many supervisors do not have the interpersonal skills needed to counsel an incompetent subordinate in a tactful or helpful way. It was mentioned that young officers are not taught how to do one-on-one counseling in which weaknesses must be addressed. Nor are they instructed on how to follow up appropriately. More than one respondent thought that brigade commanders are the key senior leaders who need to set the example for less senior leaders. Others thought battalion commanders were the primary counselors and mentors since they themselves should be past the point of needing guided development. (However, since common sentiment among respondents and current news stories both point to occasional incompetence in higher ranking officers, this may not be true of higher ranking officials within our current ranks (Faddis 2013)). In any case, it was agreed that the example of doing regular candid counseling that included guided developmental goals and good follow-up would “trickle down” to the captains and lieutenants if done by leaders at brigade and battalion level.

Additionally, three of the higher ranking respondents mentioned that they had had supervisors and mentors along their path that provided candid feedback on their failures and weaknesses. They felt that this feedback strongly influenced them and allowed them to improve their performance dramatically.

What should be done once an incompetent officer
is identified?

All of the respondents felt that appropriate counseling and a guided development plan should be the first response to an incompetent officer. It was pointed out that it is critical to tease out the true source of incompetence and not respond to just the symptom, especially in the case of failure or ignorance because that could be due to lack of opportunity (not incompetence) or lack of ability or work ethic (incompetence). Some respondents felt that an incompetent officer would be weeded out at the next promotion board as long as his OERs reflected his performance (more on that topic below) and that was the most that could be hoped for. Some respondents felt that more supervisors should attempt a relief for cause if they truly felt that an officer was unwilling or incapable of improving. However, those respondents acknowledged that the lengthy time period and substantial paperwork trail required for such an action would be prohibitive to the process because it is easier and less risky personally to let the officer slide through than it is to enforce the process. Additionally, they acknowledged that such efforts might not always be supported by higher command in the risk-adverse culture of the Army. After all, without any battle, that officer will change duty stations within three years and the problems will be on someone else's doorstep.

Does the Army tolerate incompetent officers?
If so, how can that be reduced?

This question was usually touched on when the previous question about Army culture overlooking incompetence was asked. However, at this point some respondents reiterated that incompetent officers would be weeded out at promotion boards. Additionally, there was a consensus that tactical and technical skills were more easily improved through training than the more nebulous qualities of leadership, intellectual capacity, good judgment, interpersonal skills or ethics. Also mentioned was the difficulty in developing effective measures for those qualities that could be quantified for development or counseling purposes.

How important is mentorship in developing
competent officers?

The respondents had varied ideas about what mentorship is. Some thought of it as an older and higher ranking officer who provides career advice. Some thought of it as a higher ranking officer who offers advice and shares experiences, and perhaps provides networking opportunities for job positions or promotions. Others thought of mentoring as more structured coaching from a more experienced officer. Those who thought of mentorship as career guidance or coaching agreed that mentoring was very important in developing competent officers. However, many of the respondents also thought that the mentorship relationship was a bottom-up relationship in which the younger officer sought out the older officer and proactively asked for guidance. More than one respondent commented on successful mentoring requiring a fertile and open mind on the part of the younger officer. Worth noting is that if those younger officers who look for the guidance are motivated by high levels of self-awareness and desire to learn, the advantages of the

mentorship relationship is intertwined with some pre-existing qualities that dispose the officer to higher levels of competence and success.

How important is the OER system in developing competent officers?

One of the respondents worked on the changes that were recently made on the OER. He felt strongly that the intent of the OER is that it be used not only as a year-end evaluation but as an ongoing developmental tool. However, none of the other respondents felt that it was developmental. They clearly stated that the quarterly counselings that are supposed to accompany the OER are the developmental tool and not the OER itself. They view and use the OER as a documentation of performance for promotion and job position opportunities. More than once, it was said that if the rater waited until the OER to discuss development with his subordinate it was too late for appropriate development.

How is the OER system used to identify incompetent officers?

Unfortunately, there was a consensus that the OER is inflated, but additionally, all the respondents agreed that promotion boards know and understand the unspoken rules about verbiage that should be used to differentiate among the top performers, the middle of the pack, and the bottom performers, especially the truly incompetent (versus bottom performers who still accomplish the job duties). However, it seems that the middle of the pack encompasses between 50 percent and 70 percent of the officer OERs and that promotion boards struggle to differentiate among those officers when promotion rates drop below 80 percent. However, one General Officer respondent also pointed out that the OER does not evaluate very well some of the more nebulous qualities like the ability to inspire commitment in others or manage interpersonal relationships. Therefore, if an

officer does not exhibit those qualities and is incompetent in those areas, the OER does not adequately identify those gaps. Additionally, because of the inflation and “code language” used on the evaluations, it is not helpful to an individual officer in recognizing weaknesses in order to increase competence for future performance.

How important is PME in developing competent officers?

All respondents thought PME to be critical in the development of competent officers. However, it was pointed out repeatedly that PME is a base of knowledge and training that gives officers a minimum foundation in competencies (skills) and that training and higher levels of proficiency must be achieved in the operational domain during home station training and officer development. At this point many of the respondents talked about the three pillars or components of training in the Army: institutional training (such as PME), operational training and self-development. They highlighted the fact that 80 percent of an officer’s time is spent in the operational domain and that PME cannot be responsible for all of the necessary training to make an officer proficient at every task. One respondent gave an excellent example: at the CCC the students are given two days of instruction on property accountability to include regulations, forms, methods and examples. However, the schoolhouse received feedback from the field that the captains needed additional training on property accountability. It was the respondent’s opinion that the units and commanders needed to take the responsibility to build on the training captains receive at the CCC and bring them up to full competency through home station training and guidance.

How can the Army improve officer competence?

Respondents generated dozens of excellent ideas on improving competence. Each officer had a slightly different viewpoint; however, the following list encompasses the most common themes:

1. Honest, candid and insightful counseling sessions with subordinate officers on a regular basis. These sessions should be tactful, but firm and clearly point out strengths and weaknesses without the superior officer needing to worry about risk to his career for lack of “political correctness.”
2. Training programs that are geared toward repetitions and continuous coaching and mentoring. These programs should combine basic skills with complex problem solving.
3. There should be enough training opportunities to allow for failures and improvement plus a command climate that allows some failures for learning purposes.
4. Develop ways to measure and/or evaluate interpersonal skills, self-awareness and other more nebulous leader qualities such as adaptability. When those qualities become important to promotions, they will become more valued by our culture and our systems will reflect the change in values.
5. Talent must be recruited first and then trained. Interpersonal skills and personality are set long before the officer joins the Army.
6. Greater focus on the organizational and self-study domains of training and development because institutional training should only be a small percent of the overall development of an officer.

7. Ensure that PME instructors are of the highest caliber and can provide the kind of coaching and mentoring needed to effectively hone younger officers' skills.
8. Enforce existing standards. Senior leaders must not allow empathy for their subordinate to get in the way of candid counseling, evaluations and assessments.
9. Guided self-study for younger officers. Two ways to approach this self-study could be distributed learning systems or in the organizational domain through guidance from senior leaders.
10. Job assignments more closely related to individual officer developmental needs.

At the other end of the spectrum, the respondents commonly felt that the following actions should be taken to identify and reduce the incompetence that has been allowed to breed in the officer corps:

1. Raters and senior raters must spend enough time with their subordinates to build relationships and understand how to best approach an individual's weaknesses.
2. Formal and informal sensing sessions must be conducted through NCOs in order to get the ground truth about subordinate leaders. Best to be done in an anonymous or non-attribute forum.
3. Officers must be taught and shown by example how to do the tough counseling sessions in which weaknesses and improvement are discussed frankly. Counseling must be regular and well thought out.

4. Higher chain of command must be supportive of honest counseling and evaluation reports.
5. Some form of 360 feedback should be available to raters.
6. Officers who truly cannot perform the job to standard should be moved to a more suitable position if they have the aptitude for it or removed from the Army through relief for cause.

Many of these ideas will be re-visited and expounded upon in conclusions and recommendations in chapter 5.

Competence Survey

The full summary report for the competence survey results can be found in Appendix D. Of the 274 surveys sent out, 58 students responded. The conclusions are categorized by (1) factors related to competence, (2) developmental system relationship to competence, (3) cultural insights, and (4) additional results.

Factors Related to Competence

When asked if technical proficiency, tactical proficiency, social skills and leadership qualities were critical to officer competence, the overwhelming response was yes with few dissensions. However, the responses were more divided when questions addressed ethical and moral standards as a part of competence. Although the majority answered that ethical behavior and good morals were part of competence, there were enough dissenters to consider more exploration into the understanding the officer corps has of ethics and how they see it fitting into the factors of competence.

Developmental Systems and Their Relationship to Competence

In relation to PME, the respondents to the survey agreed overwhelmingly that institutional training and education such as CGSOC improves officer competence. However, the OER was not thought of as highly. To the statement, “Officer competence levels are accurately identified by OERs,” the responses were sharply divided between agree and disagree and a high number of respondents chose “neutral.” As for counseling and mentorship, respondents agreed that both increase competence levels. Additionally, “improved counseling from senior leaders” got the most responses on the question “How can the army improve officer competence levels?” Lastly pertaining to promotion board actions, it was largely agreed that some incompetent officers do get promoted and that incompetent officers have been promoted into all levels of the officer corps.

Cultural Insights

The responses to the questions about Army culture were particularly insightful as they give a picture of underlying values and topical behaviors. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed that Army culture encourages ethical behavior and good moral character. Also overwhelmingly positive were the responses that Army culture encourages or values leadership, technical and tactical skills. However, the statement related to interpersonal skill was stated, “Army culture values interpersonal tact.” To which 68 percent of the respondents agreed, but 20 percent disagreed. This is a large enough pool of dissent to warrant a closer look although the majority agrees. Lastly, there were overwhelmingly positive responses about army culture valuing and encouraging officer competence. However, due to undesignated factors, the respondents also agreed

that the Army tolerates incompetence, but the statement did not link the tolerance to cultural values per se.

Additional Results

Additional information was gleaned from the survey. One important point was that while most respondents found that institutional training (such as PME), organizational training (such as home station training), and self-study all improve officer competence, there were small differences in the number of respondents who strongly agreed and small differences in total respondents who chose overall agreement. Those differences are annotated in table 2.

Table 2. Institutional training, Organizational training and Self-development improve competence. Answers by number of respondents out of 58 total respondents

	Institutional training	Organizational training	Self-development
Strongly Agree	22	20	29
Agree	30	36	27
Neutral	3	2	2
Disagree	1	0	0
Strongly Disagree	1	0	0

Source: Created by author.

The differences are small, but so is the sample size. It demonstrates a greater faith in self-development than organizational training or institutional training.

Also, in spite of poor opinions of the OER previously noted, respondents largely agreed that the army rewards, fosters, and promotes competence. Yet there was a strong division in the results of the statement, “Officer competence levels are accurately

identified by their superiors.” Forty percent of respondents agreed, but 31 percent disagreed.

Furthermore, a large majority of officers felt that incompetent officers should be relieved, but a majority also felt that incompetent officers could be trained to achieve competence. The nuances of this conflicting response would require further study to interpret accurately.

The last question on the survey addressed how to improve officer competence. The responses supported many other results of this investigation. The most improvement seems to be needed in counseling from senior leaders. Eighty-four percent of the respondents chose this as an area of improvement or specifically addressed the need in the write-in box on the final question.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The initial research question was “does the Army promote competence in its officers?” The analysis of the data clearly shows that the Army as an organization does promote competence in its officers. Reviewing once again the list of Fortune 500 company best practices, it is clear that Army practices mirror the list almost identically. See comparison in table 3.

Table 3. Fortune 500 best practices as compared to Army practices

<i>Fortune 500 best practices</i>	<i>Army practices</i>
Formal Development Programs	PME, OER, Counseling
360° feedback	360° feedback
Executive Coaching	360° Coaching; Rater coaching
Job Assignments	HRC job assigning per OER (planned)
Mentoring	Informal mentoring
Networking	Informal system
Reflection	Self-awareness exercises; 360° program
Action Learning	Complex exercises
Outdoor challenges	Obstacle courses; other outdoor challenges

Source: Created by author from information contained in David V. Day and Stanley M. Halpin, *Leadership Development: A Review of Industry Best Practices* (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for Behavioral and Social Sciences, 2001).

However, a closer look at the sub-questions gives us insight into areas of greater and lesser success at promoting competence through those practices.

The first sub-question was “Do established leadership development processes provide accurate tools for identifying competence and incompetence?” Essentially, the answer is yes with a couple of key caveats. It is important to note that this question only refers to the availability of accurate tools for identifying competence not improving or developing competence.

PME does evaluate competence. Curriculum and tests are written by subject matter experts and vetted before use. PME students must pass all tests with a grade of 70 percent or higher or re-test. Also, at some schools they must achieve an overall grade of 80 percent or higher in each block of instruction.

The current OER is inflated; however, senior officers seem well versed in the language that differentiates between superior performers, average performers and poor performers. Thus, it still identifies competence and incompetence. The new OERs are well designed and provide the opportunity to rate officers more accurately. It remains to be seen if the new OERs will give insight into the more nebulous aspects of competence such as adaptability, self-awareness, interpersonal skills and character qualities.

The Army provides a counseling form for quarterly counseling of subordinates that could provide a good deal of insight into strengths and weaknesses on the part of the officer if used appropriately. Additionally, the 360 feedback program can certainly identify components of competence and incompetence although the accuracy can vary depending largely on the number and type of respondents.

Promotion boards have access to extensive records on each officer and in spite of OER inflations, the boards feel confident that they are able to identify at least the top and bottom performers although the relative level of competence of the middle performers is

harder to identify. The new rater and senior rater performance blocking should provide greater accuracy in this area.

The next sub-question was “Are those tools being used to promote competence?” This is a much harder question to quantify and answer. However, within the scope of this study, the answer is yes but not without serious considerations in a few areas, especially within the counseling, coaching and mentoring systems.

PME is viewed as a critical contributor to competence and 92 percent of the survey respondents agreed that it improves competence. However, 55 percent of the survey respondents felt that improved institutional training would increase competence levels further. Specific improvements suggested by respondents included more rigorous enforcement of current grading standards, more repetition of basic skills in complex exercises and standards of the highest professional competence of staff and faculty.

Opinions on the effectiveness of the OER were divided. Senior leaders felt more strongly that the OER adequately differentiates among officers than the CGSOC student respondents whose confidence as a group in the OER was only 29 percent. The new OER may alleviate some of the concerns at the Major level, but the lack of confidence in the OER should be monitored and investigated if it continues.

Promotion board processes are highly dependent on accurate OERs, and high achievers are promoted consistently. However, small numbers of incompetent officers have been promoted into all levels of the Army officer corps. Often these officers continue to be promoted because “mission accomplishment” is equated with “competent” when in reality a variety of others factors play into a unit’s overall performance. This is

undoubtedly related to the fact that OERs do not adequately evaluate all attributes and competencies that are critical to competence overall.

Lastly, it is apparent that the Army's counseling, coaching and mentoring systems are failing. The counseling system is underutilized, lacks candid evaluations and provides little guidance or follow-through on improvement programs. The 360 feedback program is new and should be evaluated in depth after a few years of data and experience have been accumulated. However, few officers take advantage of the coaching option, so it cannot be considered an overall effective program for the coaching aspect. Mentoring is a voluntary relationship between older and younger officers in order to share knowledge and experience and some respondents recommended better mentorship programs. Others expressed concern that a formal program might not provide the same genuine sharing and learning that informal relationships encourage.

The third question was "Does the Army reward competence in individual officers?" Again, the overall answer is yes. Most importantly, a large majority of respondents agreed that the Army values and promotes competence, apparently in spite of the obstacles presented by our systems. This optimism is a key building block for the continued promotion of the Profession of Arms.

Yet, there is a concern that competence is not necessarily rewarded with commitment from the Army since other studies show that the "up or out" policy of promotions is a huge concern for the officer corps (Department of the Army 2003). Since the Army needs fewer and fewer officers at the higher ranks, it is possible that only top performers are being promoted and being simply "competent" is not enough to ensure a continuing career.

Additionally, it is possible that a significant pool of competent officers who did not feel that competence was rewarded in our system left the Army officer corps early on in their careers and are not represented in the survey pool.

The last question was “Is officer incompetence tolerated in the Army? If so, why? Is Army culture a factor?” Dividing the question appropriately, the answer to the first part is a resounding “yes.” Gleaning the reasons why is more complicated, but there are at least three contributing factors worth considering.

The first factor is the lack of candid, regular counseling when a senior officer recognizes incompetence in a subordinate. Highly related to this factor is a lack of higher command awareness or support of the situation.

The second main factor is related to interpersonal skills and its relationship to competence. Interpersonal skills are considered critical to competence, but poorly defined, difficult to measure, and given low priority on competence evaluations. Current issues with leader toxicity are undoubtedly related to this lack of focus on interpersonal skills and the related attributes and competencies.

The third factor is related to ethical behavior and moral character. These characteristics are considered vital to the success of the Army and every individual officer, but often absent from the understanding of "competence" in individuals. This may be an acceptable division of concepts (character vs. competence) for recruiting and training purposes, but the current levels of moral failure by senior leaders can be partly explained by this reported understanding among the officer corps that moral character is not a part of the competency of an officer.

As for the relationship of culture to the tolerance of incompetence, both the institution and the officers themselves espouse that they value competence, but there must be overriding theories-in-use that allow the tolerance of incompetence to continue. High demands for manning cannot be blamed for unacceptable behavior or lack of appropriate action nor can busy schedules. Some underlying cultural value, such as risk-adversity or short-term results orientation, must influence senior leaders' handling of counseling sessions and/or higher commands' involvement in action against incompetence.

Also related to culture, interpersonal skills and ethical behavior are highly espoused as values, but recent reports of toxic leaders and moral failures show some conflict in underlying values. Hard-driving competitiveness combined with being results-oriented certainly contributes to the acceptability of toxic leadership. Underlying ethical values were not assessed by Pierce, but his methods and results would make a good basis for additional study on Army cultural values related to ethics.

Case Studies Revisited

The question becomes: when compared to real life cases, do the study results address the observed failures? In the first case study, the cadet appeared to have issues related to interpersonal skills, tactical skills, physical capability and moral character. She was only counseled candidly in writing one time that year and her chain of command was reticent to take further negative action in spite of concerns from her instructor. It is impossible to say how the situation may have changed with honest counseling after each negative event, a guided improvement program with follow-up and a more involvement

from the other cadre, but many of the key points from this investigation are evident in this case study.

In the second case study, the officer's lack of moral character, inability to develop trust with his subordinates and incompetence in standard tasks was clearly known by his immediate commander. The commander took the time and effort to document the failings of this captain, but the educational institution failed to adequately document his lack of technical and communication skills. From the viewpoint of the battalion commander, higher command took little interest and no effort to investigate the validity of his concerns until a more serious offense was reported. Once again, many of the key points in this competency investigation are apparent in this case.

The last case study shows similar results. Lack of interpersonal skills and questionable moral character were certainly a part of the scenario. There was no history of written counseling and his previous OICs had either not informed higher command of the issues or higher command took no interest. The situation had been going on for years negating the thought that his behavior was a short-lived lapse in judgment.

Recommendations for immediate action

The Army's whole system of counseling, coaching and mentoring needs an overhaul. The first step is a command emphasis from the Chief of Staff down on using the counseling system the Army already has in a consistent and candid fashion. Immediate training on what "right" looks like should be implemented at all levels and higher commands must make counseling packets an inspected item. Senior raters should receive summaries and updates to maintain basic awareness of individual performance in order to better equip them for upcoming OERs.

Coaching and mentoring require more time and resources to implement change. However, there are two programs already available to the Army for immediate improvements in those arenas. The 360 program offers coaching. At least one 360 coaching session after each feedback survey should be mandatory in order to ensure the officer takes the time to review the results. Also, the Army G-1 web site offers a little known “Army Mentorship Program” but none of the links to the page are working at the time of this writing. The program should be re-instated and lieutenants and captains in the BOLC and CCC courses should be encouraged to enroll if they do not already have an established mentorship relationship. Further development of the 360 coaching and Army Mentorship Program or other similar programs should be investigated promptly.

Recommendations for further study

A new ATLDP is being done this year. Considering the vast amount of academic work that has been done since the 2003 ATLDP and the changes the Army adopted due to the recommendations of that ATLDP, the new study results will be very insightful and should be considered in the development of ongoing research.

One important area of further study is related to the attributes or character qualities the Army wants in its officers. Since there is disagreement on the ability to train or develop all of these qualities, the question to be answered is “Which of the character qualities or attributes of leaders must be recruited and which can be improved or matured through training, education and mentorship? The answers to this question could drive changes in recruiting as well as training, education and mentorship programs and goals.

A second area of study is related to the attribute of “interpersonal tact” and the competencies of “builds trust,” “extends influence,” and “communicates” (from the

Leadership Requirements Model in figure 1). In this study, these attributes and competencies are related to the discussions on interpersonal skills. Again, there were varying opinions on the importance of interpersonal skills in competence for Army officers. The Army must discern if interpersonal skills really are a part of competence and if so, then why is it not valued sufficiently? There are many aspects of interpersonal skills, perhaps some are vital to the professionalism of the force and others are not. And lastly, is it possible to measure and evaluate officers on these skills? How can those measures be implemented? Again, the answers to this question could drive changes in recruiting as well as training, education and mentorship programs and goals.

Another important area of further study is an actualization of how Army officers think about ethics and moral character. Can an officer be competent without having good moral character? Even if ethical behavior or moral character is emphasized separately from competence in the development and evaluation of officers, further study needs to be done on the different values that make up our cultural values concerning ethical behavior, particularly in areas in which there have been highly visible and dramatic failings. For example, does Army culture truly value the professional treatment of blacks and women? How about marital faithfulness? What about fiscal accountability? These issues cannot be lumped together under an umbrella. Only by evaluating the true values underlying each of the ethical issues can we begin to understand how to achieve organizational change if necessary in those areas.

As a follow-up to the immediate actions concerning the Army counseling, coaching and mentoring programs, the Army should take a closer look at how Fortune 500 companies execute their programs in this area. Further interviews and surveys of

senior officers might reveal novel ways of approaching the programs or at least a list of “best practices” within counseling, coaching and mentoring. Additionally, it is important to take a close look at underlying cultural values that interfere with using the existing systems effectively.

Lastly, it could prove very useful to take a hard look at how other DOD organizations approach the issues brought up in this investigation. How do other military services define competent? How do they identify, recruit, train, retain, reward and promote competence? Would responses on similar interviews and surveys in other military services be similar or significantly different? What about other agencies like the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency or the Drug Enforcement Agency? What can the Army learn or glean from these similar organizations?

Closing Remarks

Why talk about competence? As the Army continues to pursue higher levels of professionalism and performance, it is critical to ensure that officer competence is understood in the context of Army culture and that it is effectively identified, recruited, trained, retained, rewarded and promoted. That is a vast and complex task, but one the Army does well on many fronts. This investigation was able to pinpoint a few areas for improvement and make some recommendations based on the thoughts of a group of experienced and well-educated officers. The Army needs dramatic improvement in their counseling, coaching and mentoring systems. There is also a need to re-evaluate the underlying values of Army culture in relationship to interpersonal skills and ethical behavior in order to better understand and promote those qualities and skills in competent

officers. As a Profession of Arms, competence is one of two pillars that uphold the status of “professional” for our Soldiers and officers in their own eyes and the eyes of the public. Therefore, it is a professional imperative that the Army promote competence in its members to the full extent possible in each of the established development systems as well as through strong organizational culture.

APPENDIX A

ARMY VALUES

Many people know what the words Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage mean. But how often do you see someone actually live up to them? Soldiers learn these values in detail during Basic Combat Training (BCT), from then on they live them every day in everything they do—whether they are on the job or off. In short, the Seven Core Army Values listed below are what being a Soldier is all about.

Loyalty

Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit and other Soldiers. Bearing true faith and allegiance is a matter of believing in and devoting yourself to something or someone. A loyal Soldier is one who supports the leadership and stands up for fellow Soldiers. By wearing the uniform of the U.S. Army you are expressing your loyalty. And by doing your share, you show your loyalty to your unit.

Duty

Fulfill your obligations. Doing your duty means more than carrying out your assigned tasks. Duty means being able to accomplish tasks as part of a team. The work of the U.S. Army is a complex combination of missions, tasks and responsibilities—all in constant motion. Our work entails building one assignment onto another. You fulfill your obligations as a part of your unit every time you resist the temptation to take “shortcuts” that might undermine the integrity of the final product.

Respect

Treat people as they should be treated. In the Soldier's Code, we pledge to "treat others with dignity and respect while expecting others to do the same." Respect is what allows us to appreciate the best in other people. Respect is trusting that all people have done their jobs and fulfilled their duty. And self-respect is a vital ingredient with the Army value of respect, which results from knowing you have put forth your best effort. The Army is one team and each of us has something to contribute.

Selfless Service

Put the welfare of the nation, the Army and your subordinates before your own. Selfless service is larger than just one person. In serving your country, you are doing your duty loyally without thought of recognition or gain. The basic building block of selfless service is the commitment of each team member to go a little further, endure a little longer, and look a little closer to see how he or she can add to the effort.

Honor

Live up to Army values. The nation's highest military award is The Medal of Honor. This award goes to Soldiers who make honor a matter of daily living—Soldiers who develop the habit of being honorable, and solidify that habit with every value choice they make. Honor is a matter of carrying out, acting, and living the values of respect, duty, loyalty, selfless service, integrity and personal courage in everything you do.

Integrity

Do what's right, legally and morally. Integrity is a quality you develop by adhering to moral principles. It requires that you do and say nothing that deceives others. As your integrity grows, so does the trust others place in you. The more choices you

make based on integrity, the more this highly prized value will affect your relationships with family and friends, and, finally, the fundamental acceptance of yourself.

Personal Courage

Face fear, danger or adversity (physical or moral). Personal courage has long been associated with our Army. With physical courage, it is a matter of enduring physical duress and at times risking personal safety. Facing moral fear or adversity may be a long, slow process of continuing forward on the right path, especially if taking those actions is not popular with others. You can build your personal courage by daily standing up for and acting upon the things that you know are honorable (Army Values 2013).

APPENDIX B CURRENT OFFICER EVALUATION FORMS

OFFICER EVALUATION REPORT										FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (FOUO) SEE PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT IN AR 623-3.																																																																									
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CHARACTER Disposition of the leader: combination of values, attributes, and skills affecting leader actions																																																																																			
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b. LEADER ATTRIBUTES / SKILLS / ACTIONS: First, mark "YES" or "NO" for each block. Second, choose a total of six that best describe the rated officer. Select one from ATTRIBUTES, two from SKILLS (Competence), and three from ACTIONS (LEADERSHIP). Place an "X" in the appropriate numbered box with optional comments in PART Vb. Comments are mandatory in Part Vb for all "No" entries.																																																																																			
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DA FORM 67-9, OCT 2011

PREVIOUS EDITIONS ARE OBSOLETE.

Page 1 of 2
APD PE v1.01ES

NAME	SSN	PERIOD COVERED
PART V - PERFORMANCE AND POTENTIAL EVALUATION (Rater)		
a. EVALUATE THE RATED OFFICER'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE RATING PERIOD AND HIS/HER POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION <input type="checkbox"/> OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE, MUST PROMOTE <input type="checkbox"/> SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE, PROMOTE <input type="checkbox"/> UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE, DO NOT PROMOTE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Explain)		
b. COMMENT ON SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PERFORMANCE, REFER TO PART III, DA FORM 67-9 AND PART IVa, b, AND PART Vb, DA FORM 67-9-1.		
c. COMMENT ON POTENTIAL FOR PROMOTION.		
d. IDENTIFY ANY UNIQUE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OR AREAS OF EXPERTISE OF VALUE TO THE ARMY THAT THIS OFFICER POSSESSES. FOR ARMY COMPETITIVE CATEGORY CPT ALSO INDICATE A POTENTIAL CAREER FIELD FOR FUTURE SERVICE.		
PART VI - INTERMEDIATE RATER		
PART VII - SENIOR RATER		
a. EVALUATE THE RATED OFFICER'S PROMOTION POTENTIAL TO THE NEXT HIGHER GRADE <input type="checkbox"/> BEST QUALIFIED <input type="checkbox"/> FULLY QUALIFIED <input type="checkbox"/> DO NOT PROMOTE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (Explain below)		
I currently senior rate _____ officer(s) in this grade A completed DA Form 67-9-1 was received with this report and considered in my evaluation and review <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO (Explain in d)		
b. POTENTIAL COMPARED WITH OFFICERS SENIOR RATED IN SAME GRADE (OVERPRINTED BY DA) <input type="checkbox"/> ABOVE CENTER OF MASS <small>(Less than 50% in top box; Center of Mass if 50% or more in top box)</small> <input type="checkbox"/> CENTER OF MASS <input type="checkbox"/> BELOW CENTER OF MASS RETAIN <input type="checkbox"/> BELOW CENTER OF MASS DO NOT RETAIN	c. COMMENT ON PERFORMANCE/POTENTIAL	
d. LIST THREE FUTURE ASSIGNMENTS FOR WHICH THIS OFFICER IS BEST SUITED. FOR ARMY COMPETITIVE CATEGORY CPT, ALSO INDICATE A POTENTIAL CAREER FIELD FOR FUTURE SERVICE.		

DA FORM 67-9, OCT 2011

Page 2 of 2
APD PE v1.01ES

Source: Human Resources Command, Working Draft Copies, Fort Knox, KY, October 2011.

APPENDIX B

New OER Form O1 thru O7

BQDA #		OFFICER EVALUATION REPORT DRAFT (O1 thru O3; WO1 thru CW2) For use of this form, see AR 623-3; the proponent agency is DCS, G-1				SEE PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT <i>In AR 623-3</i>	
PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE (Rated Officer)							
a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	b. SSN	c. RANK	d. DATE OF RANK (YYYYMMDD)	e. BRANCH	f. COMP Status Code		
g. UNIT, ORG., STATION, ZIP CODE OR APO, MAJOR COMMAND			h. UIC CODE	i. REASON FOR SUBMISSION			
j. PERIOD COVERED		k. RATED MONTHS	l. NONRATED CODES	m. NO OF ENCL.	n. RATED OFFICER'S AND EMAIL ADDRESS (gov or .mil)		
FROM (YYYYMMDD)	THRU (YYYYMMDD)						
PART II - AUTHENTICATION (Rated officer's signature verifies officer has seen completed OER Parts I-VI and the admin data is correct)							
a1. NAME OF RATER (Last, First, MI)	a2. SSN	a3. RANK	a4. POSITION	a5. SIGNATURE	a6. DATE (yyyyymmdd)		
				a7. E-MAIL ADDRESS (.gov or .mil)			
b1. NAME OF INTERMEDIATE RATER (Last, First, MI)	b2. Not Required	b3. RANK	b4. POSITION	b5. SIGNATURE	b6. DATE (yyyyymmdd)		
				b7. E-MAIL ADDRESS (.gov or .mil)			
c1. NAME OF SENIOR RATER (Last, First, MI)	c2. SSN	c3. RANK	c4. POSITION	c5. SIGNATURE	c6. DATE (yyyyymmdd)		
e7. SENIOR RATER'S ORGANIZATION	e8. BRANCH	e9. COMPONENT	e10. SENIOR RATER PHONE NUMBER	e11. E-MAIL ADDRESS (.gov or .mil)			
d. This is a referred report; do you wish to make comments?				e1. SIGNATURE OF RATED OFFICER		e2. DATE (yyyyymmdd)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Referred <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, comments attached <input type="checkbox"/> No							
f1. Supplemental Review Required: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				g. MSAF Date: _____			
f2. NAME OF REVIEWER (Last, First, MI)	f3. RANK	f4. POSITION	f5. SIGNATURE	f6. DATE (yyyyymmdd)	f7. COMMENTS ENCLOSED <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
PART III - DUTY DESCRIPTION							
a. PRINCIPAL DUTY TITLE				b. POSITION AOC/BR			
c. SIGNIFICANT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.							
<div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 10px; border: 1px solid black;"> WORKING DRAFT ONLY- 19 SEP 2012 </div>							
PART IV - PERFORMANCE EVALUATION - PROFESSIONALISM, COMPETENCIES AND ATTRIBUTES (Rater)							
a. APFT Pass/Fail/Profile: _____ DATE: _____ HEIGHT: _____ WEIGHT: _____ WITHIN STANDARD? Yes/No: _____ (Comments required for "failed" APFT, or "profile" when it precludes performance of duty, and "no" for Army weight standards)							
b. This Officer's Overall Performance is Rated As: (Select one box representing Rated Officer's overall performance compared to others of the same grade whom you have known in your career. Managed at less than 50% in EXCELS.) I currently rate _____ Army Officers in this grade.							
EXCELS (49%)		PROFICIENT		CAPABLE		UNSATISFACTORY	
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
Comments:							

WORKING DRAFT ONLY– 19 SEP 2012

d2. Provide narrative comments which demonstrate performance regarding field grade competencies and attributes in the Rated Officer's current duty position. (i.e. demonstrates excellent presence, confidence and resilience in expected duties and unexpected situation, adjusts to external influence on the mission or taskings and organization, prioritizes limited resources to accomplish mission, proactive in developing others through individual coaching counseling and mentoring, active learner to master organizational level knowledge, critical thinking and visioning skills, anticipates and provides for subordinates on –the-job needs for training and development, effective communicator across echelons and outside the Army chain of command, effective at engaging others, presenting information and recommendations and persuasion, highly proficient at critical thinking, judgment and innovation, proficient in utilizing Army design method and other to solve complex problems, uses all influence techniques to empower others; proactive in gaining trust in negotiations, remains respectful, firm and fair.)

Comments:

e. This Officer's Overall Performance is Rated as: (Select one box representing Rated Officer's overall performance compared to others of the same grade whom you have known in your career. Managed at less than 50% in EXCELS.) I currently rate ____ Army Officers in this grade.

EXCELS
(W%)

☐

PROFICIENT

☐

CAPABLE

☐

UNSATISFACTORY

☐

Comments:

PART V – INTERMEDIATE RATER

WORKING DRAFT ONLY– 19 SEP 2012

PART VI – SENIOR RATER

a. POTENTIAL COMPARED WITH OFFICERS SENIOR RATED IN SAME GRADE (OVERPRINTED BY DA)

☐

Most Qualified
(limited to 48%)

☐

Highly Qualified

☐

Qualified

☐

Not Qualified

b. I currently senior rate ____ Army Officers in this grade.

c. COMMENT ON POTENTIAL:

d. LIST 3 FUTURE SUCCESSIVE ASSIGNMENTS FOR WHICH THIS OFFICER IS BEST SUITED:

HQDA # _____

OFFICER EVALUATION REPORT DRAFT (CW5 & O5)

For use of this form, see AR 623-3; the proponent agency is DCS, G-1

SEE PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT
In AR623-3**PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE (Rated Officer)**

a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	b. SSN	c. RANK	d. DATE OF RANK (YYYYMMDD)	e. BRANCH	f. COMP Status Code
g. UNIT, ORG., STATION, ZIP CODE OR APO, MAJOR COMMAND			h. UIC CODE	i. REASON FOR SUBMISSION	
j. PERIOD COVERED		k. RATED MONTHS	l. NONRATED CODES	m. NO OF ENCL.	n. RATED OFFICER'S APO EMAIL ADDRESS (.gov or .mil)
FROM (YYYYMMDD)	THRU (YYYYMMDD)				

PART II - AUTHENTICATION (Rated officer's signature verifies officer has seen completed OER Parts I-VI and the admin data is correct)

a1. NAME OF RATER (Last, First, MI)	a2. SSN	a3. RANK	a4. POSITION	a5. SIGNATURE	a6. DATE (YYYYMMDD)
				a7. E-MAIL ADDRESS (.gov or .mil)	
b1. NAME OF INTERMEDIATE RATER (Last, First, MI)	b2. Not Required	b3. RANK	b4. POSITION	b5. SIGNATURE	b6. DATE (YYYYMMDD)
				b7. E-MAIL ADDRESS (.gov or .mil)	
c1. NAME OF SENIOR RATER (Last, First, MI)	c2. SSN	c3. RANK	c4. POSITION	c5. SIGNATURE	c6. DATE (YYYYMMDD)
c7. SENIOR RATER'S ORGANIZATION		c8. BRANCH	c9. COMPONENT	c10. SENIOR RATER PHONE NUMBER	c11. E-MAIL ADDRESS (.gov or .mil)
d. This is a referred report; do you wish to make comments?				e1. SIGNATURE OF RATED OFFICER	e2. DATE (YYYYMMDD)
<input type="checkbox"/> Referred <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, comments attached. <input type="checkbox"/> No					
f1. Supplemental Review Required: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No					g. MSAF Date: _____
f2. NAME OF REVIEWER (Last, First, MI)	f3. RANK	f4. POSITION	f5. SIGNATURE	f6. DATE (YYYYMMDD)	f7. COMMENTS ENCLOSED <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

PART III - DUTY DESCRIPTION

a. PRINCIPAL DUTY TITLE	b. POSITION AOC/BR
c. SIGNIFICANT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.	
<div style="background-color: yellow; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> WORKING DRAFT ONLY- 19 SEP 2012 </div>	

PART IV - PERFORMANCE EVALUATION - PROFESSIONALISM, COMPETENCIES AND ATTRIBUTES (Rater)

a. APFT Pass/Fail/Profile: _____ DATE: _____ HEIGHT: _____ WEIGHT: _____ WITHIN STANDARD? Yes/No: _____ (Comments required for "failed" APFT, or "profile" when precludes performance of duty, and "no" for Army weight standards)	
b. THIS OFFICER POSSESSES SKILLS AND QUALITIES FOR THE FOLLOWING BROADENING ASSIGNMENTS:	
c. THIS OFFICER POSSESSES SKILLS AND QUALITIES FOR THE FOLLOWING OPERATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS:	
d1. <u>Character:</u> (Include narrative comments addressing Rated Officer's performance as it relates to adherence to Army Values, Empathy, and Warrior Ethos/Service Ethos and Discipline.)	

d2. Provide narrative comments which demonstrate performance regarding field grade competencies and attributes in the Rated Officer's current duty position. (i.e. demonstrates excellent presence, confidence and resilience in expected duties and unexpected situation, adjusts to external influence on the mission or taskings and organization, prioritizes limited resources to accomplish mission, proactive in developing others through individual coaching counseling and mentoring, active learner to master organizational level knowledge, critical thinking and visioning skills, anticipates and provides for subordinates on-the-job needs for training and development, effective communicator across echelons and outside the Army chain of command, effective at engaging others, presenting information and recommendations and persuasion, highly proficient at critical thinking, judgment and innovation, proficient in utilizing Army design method and other to solve complex problems, uses all influence techniques to empower others; proactive in gaining trust in negotiations, remains respectful, firm and fair.)

Comments:

e. This Officer's Overall Performance is Rated as: (Select one box representing Rated Officer's overall performance compared to others of the same grade whom you have known in your career. Managed at less than 50% in EXCELS.) I currently rate ____ Army Officers in this grade.

EXCELS
(49%)

☐

PROFICIENT

☐

CAPABLE

☐

UNSATISFACTORY

☐

Comments:

PART V – INTERMEDIATE RATER

WORKING DRAFT ONLY– 19 SEP 2012

PART VI – SENIOR RATER

a. POTENTIAL COMPARED WITH OFFICERS SENIOR RATED IN SAME GRADE (OVERPRINTED BY DA)

☐

Top 10%

☐

Most Qualified

☐

Highly Qualified

☐

Qualified

☐

Not Qualified

Top 10% cannot exceed 10% of population
Upper two boxes cumulative percentage managed at 49%.

b. I currently senior rate ____ Army Officers in this grade.

c. COMMENT ON POTENTIAL:

Top two boxes cumulative percentage cannot exceed 49%.

No Box Check for CW5

d. LIST 3 FUTURE SUCCESSIVE ASSIGNMENTS FOR WHICH THIS OFFICER IS BEST SUITED:

RQDA 2: _____				OFFICER EVALUATION REPORT DRAFT O6 – O7 For use of this form, see AR 623-3, the proponent agency is DCS, G-1				SEE PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT In AR623-3				
PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE (Rated Officer)												
a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)			b. SSN		c. RANK		d. DATE OF RANK (YYYYMMDD)		e. BRANCH		f. COM's Status Code	
g. UNIT, ORG., STATION, ZIP CODE ORAPO, MAJOR COMMAND						h. UIC CODE		i. REASON FOR SUBMISSION				
j. PERIOD COVERED				k. RATER'S WORKSTATION		l. RATER'S CODE		m. RATER'S PHONE		n. RATER'S EMAIL ADDRESS (gov or mil)		
FROM (YYYYMMDD)		THRU (YYYYMMDD)										
PART II - AUTHENTICATION (Rated officer's signature verifies officer has seen completed OER (Parts I-VI) and the admin data is correct)												
a1. NAME OF RATER (Last, First, MI)		a2. SSN		a3. RANK		a4. POSITION		a5. SIGNATURE		a6. DATE (YYYYMMDD)		
b1. NAME OF INTERMEDIATE RATER (Last, First, MI)		b2. Not Required		b3. RANK		b4. POSITION		b5. SIGNATURE		b6. DATE (YYYYMMDD)		
c1. NAME OF SENIOR RATER (Last, First, MI)		c2. SSN		c3. RANK		c4. POSITION		c5. SIGNATURE		c6. DATE (YYYYMMDD)		
d1. SENIOR RATER'S ORGANIZATION		d2. BRANCH		d3. COMPANY		d4. SENIOR RATER PHONE NUMBER		d5. EMAIL ADDRESS (gov or mil)				
d. This is a referred report; do you wish to make comments?						<input type="checkbox"/> Referred		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, comments attached		<input type="checkbox"/> No		
e1. SIGNATURE OF RATER'S OFFICER						e2. DATE (YYYYMMDD)						
f1. Supplemental Review Required: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No												
f2. NAME OF REVIEWER (Last, First, MI)		f3. RANK		f4. POSITION		f5. SIGNATURE		f6. DATE (YYYYMMDD)		f7. COMMENTS ENCLOSED <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> NO		
PART III - DUTY DESCRIPTION												
a. PRINCIPAL DUTY TITLE						b. POSITION ACDR						
c. SIGNIFICANT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES												
WORKING DRAFT ONLY- 11 OCT 2012												
PART IV - PERFORMANCE EVALUATION - PROFESSIONALISM, COMPETENCIES AND ATTRIBUTES (Rater)												
a. APFT (Pass/Fail/Profile): _____ DATE: _____ HEIGHT: _____ WEIGHT: _____ WITHIN STANDARD? Yes/No: _____ (Comments required for "failed" APFT, or "profile" when precludes performance of duty, and "no" for Army weight standards)												
b. THIS OFFICER POSSESSES SKILLS AND QUALITIES FOR THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIC ASSIGNMENTS:												
c1. Character: (Include narrative comments addressing Rated Officer's performance as it relates to adherence to Army Values, Integrity, and Warrior Ethos/Service Ethos and Discipline.)												

<p>o2. Provide narrative comments which demonstrate performance regarding strategic competencies in the Rated Officer's current duty position. (i.e. providing vision, motivation, and inspiration, negotiating within and beyond national boundaries, building strategic consensus, leading and inspiring change, dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity, creates a positive environment to prepare for the future, expanding knowledge in cultural and geopolitical areas, self-awareness and recognition of impact on others, building team skills and processes, allocating the right resources, capitalizing on unified action partner assets, capitalizing on technology, accomplishes missions consistently and ethically)</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>d. This Officer's Overall Potential is Rated as: (Select one box representing Rated Officer's overall potential compared to others of the same grade whom you have known in your career.)</p>	
<p>Multi-Star Potential <input type="checkbox"/> <small>(GO&SS&Regulation/Reason Only)</small></p>	<p>Promote to BG <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Retain at Current Grade <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Comments:</p>	
<p>PART V – INTERMEDIATE RATER</p>	
<p style="background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; padding: 10px;">WORKING DRAFT ONLY– 11 OCT 2012</p>	
<p>PART VI – SENIOR RATER</p>	
<p>POTENTIAL COMPARED WITH OFFICERS OF THE SAME GRADE (DISTRIBUTED BY DA)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Top 10%</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Most Qualified</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Highly Qualified</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Qualified</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not Qualified</p> <p style="font-size: small; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;">Top 10% cannot exceed 10% of population Upper two boxes cumulative percentage maintained at 49%</p>	<p>b. I currently Senior rate _____ Army Officers in this grade.</p> <p>c. COMMENT ON POTENTIAL:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: yellow; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Top two boxes cumulative percentage cannot exceed 49%.</p> </div> <p>d. LIST 3 FUTURE GOALS STRATEGIC ASSIGNMENTS FOR WHICH THIS OFFICER IS BEST SUITED.</p>

Source: Human Resources Command, Working Draft Copies, Fort Knox, KY, September-October 2012.

APPENDIX C

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY COUNSELING FORM

DEVELOPMENTAL COUNSELING FORM For use of this form, see FM 6-22; the proponent agency is TRADOC.		
DATA REQUIRED BY THE PRIVACY ACT OF 1974		
AUTHORITY:	5 USC 301, Departmental Regulations; 10 USC 3013, Secretary of the Army.	
PRINCIPAL PURPOSE:	To assist leaders in conducting and recording counseling data pertaining to subordinates.	
ROUTINE USES:	The DoD Blanket Routine Uses set forth at the beginning of the Army's compilation of systems or records notices also apply to this system.	
DISCLOSURE:	Disclosure is voluntary.	
PART I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA		
Name (Last, First, MI)	Rank/Grade PVT/E-1	Date of Counseling
Organization	Name and Title of Counselor	
PART II - BACKGROUND INFORMATION		
Purpose of Counseling: (Leader states the reason for the counseling, e.g. Performance/Professional or Event-Oriented counseling, and includes the leader's facts and observations prior to the counseling.)		
PART III - SUMMARY OF COUNSELING Complete this section during or immediately subsequent to counseling.		
Key Points of Discussion:		
OTHER INSTRUCTIONS This form will be destroyed upon: reassignment (other than rehabilitative transfers), separation at ETS, or upon retirement. For separation requirements and notification of loss of benefits/consequences see local directives and AR 635-200.		

DA FORM 4856, AUG 2010

PREVIOUS EDITIONS ARE OBSOLETE.

APD PE v1.00ES

Plan of Action <i>(Outlines actions that the subordinate will do after the counseling session to reach the agreed upon goal(s). The actions must be specific enough to modify or maintain the subordinate's behavior and include a specified time line for implementation and assessment (Part IV below))</i>	
Session Closing: <i>(The leader summarizes the key points of the session and checks if the subordinate understands the plan of action. The subordinate agrees/disagrees and provides remarks if appropriate.)</i> Individual counseled: <input type="checkbox"/> I agree <input type="checkbox"/> I disagree with the information above. Individual counseled remarks:	
Signature of Individual Counseled: _____	Date: _____
Leader Responsibilities: <i>(Leader's responsibilities in implementing the plan of action.)</i>	
Signature of Counselor: _____	Date: _____
PART IV - ASSESSMENT OF THE PLAN OF ACTION	
Assessment: <i>(Did the plan of action achieve the desired results? This section is completed by both the leader and the individual counseled and provides useful information for follow-up counseling.)</i>	
Counselor: _____	Individual Counseled: _____
Date of Assessment: _____	
Note: Both the counselor and the individual counseled should retain a record of the counseling.	

REVERSE, DA FORM 4856, AUG 2010

APD PE v1.00ES

Source: Human Resources Command, Working Draft Copies, Fort Knox, KY, August 2010.

APPENDIX D

OFFICER COMPETENCE SURVEY, SUMMARY REPORT

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

Scale 1

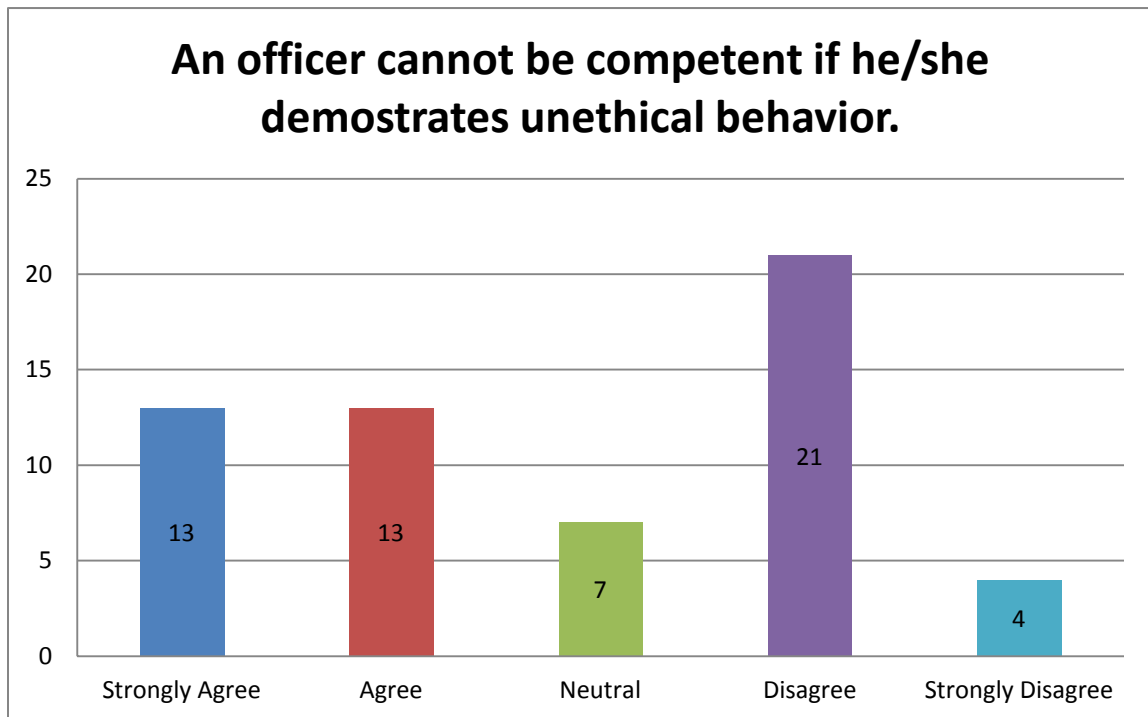
Question Type: Choose one

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
An officer cannot be competent if he/she demonstrates unethical behavior.	13 22%	13 22%	7 12%	21 36%	4 7%	58
Ethical behavior is an integral part of officer competence.	20 34%	22 38%	4 7%	11 19%	1 2%	58
Army culture encourages ethical behavior.	12 21%	30 52%	12 21%	4 7%	0 0%	58
An officer cannot be competent if he/she has poor moral character.	12 21%	22 38%	5 9%	17 29%	2 3%	58
Moral character is an integral part of officer competence.	17 29%	28 48%	5 9%	8 14%	0 0%	58
Army culture encourages good moral character.	15 26%	30 52%	10 17%	3 5%	0 0%	58
Total Responses	89	145	43	64	7	348

An officer cannot be competent if he/she demonstrates unethical behavior

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

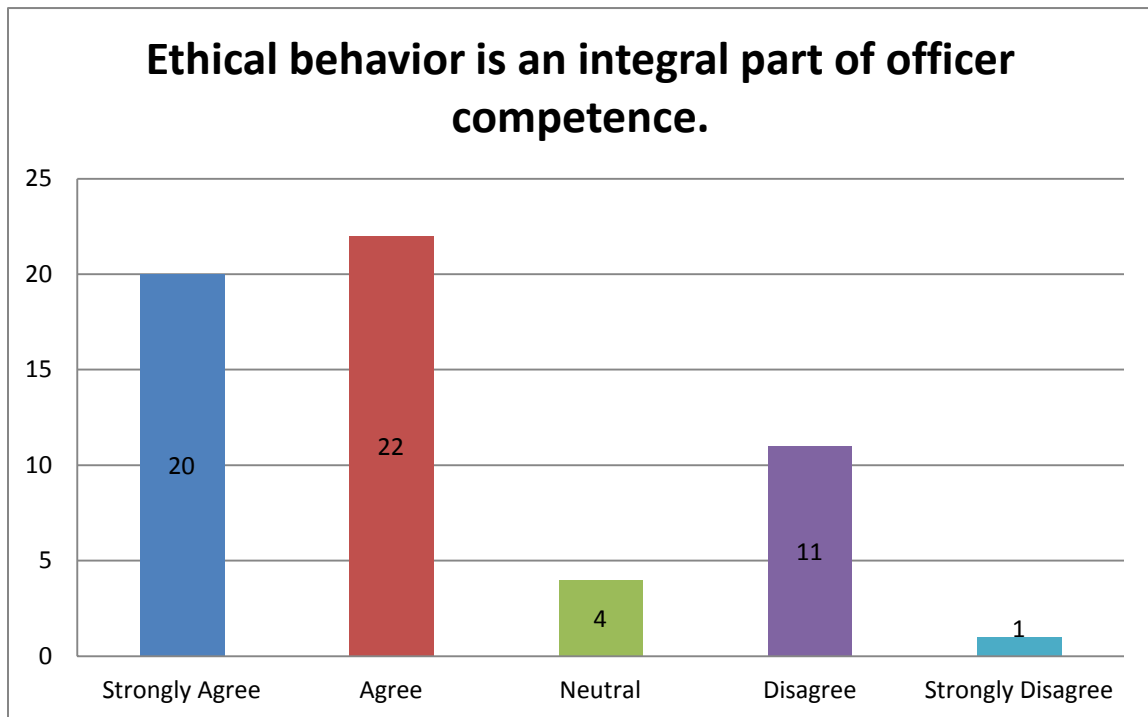
Strongly Agree	13
Agree	13
Neutral	7
Disagree	21
Strongly Disagree	4
Total Responses	58



Ethical behavior is an integral part of officer competence

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

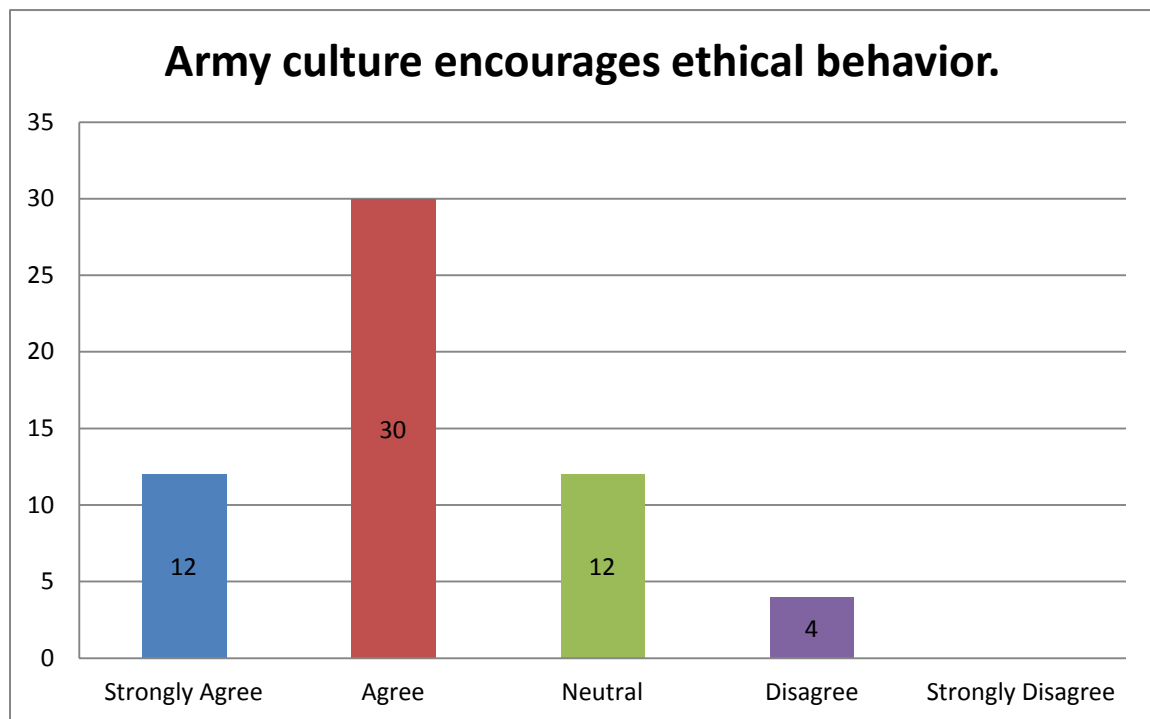
Strongly Agree	20
Agree	22
Neutral	4
Disagree	11
Strongly Disagree	1
Total Responses	58



Army culture encourages ethical behavior

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

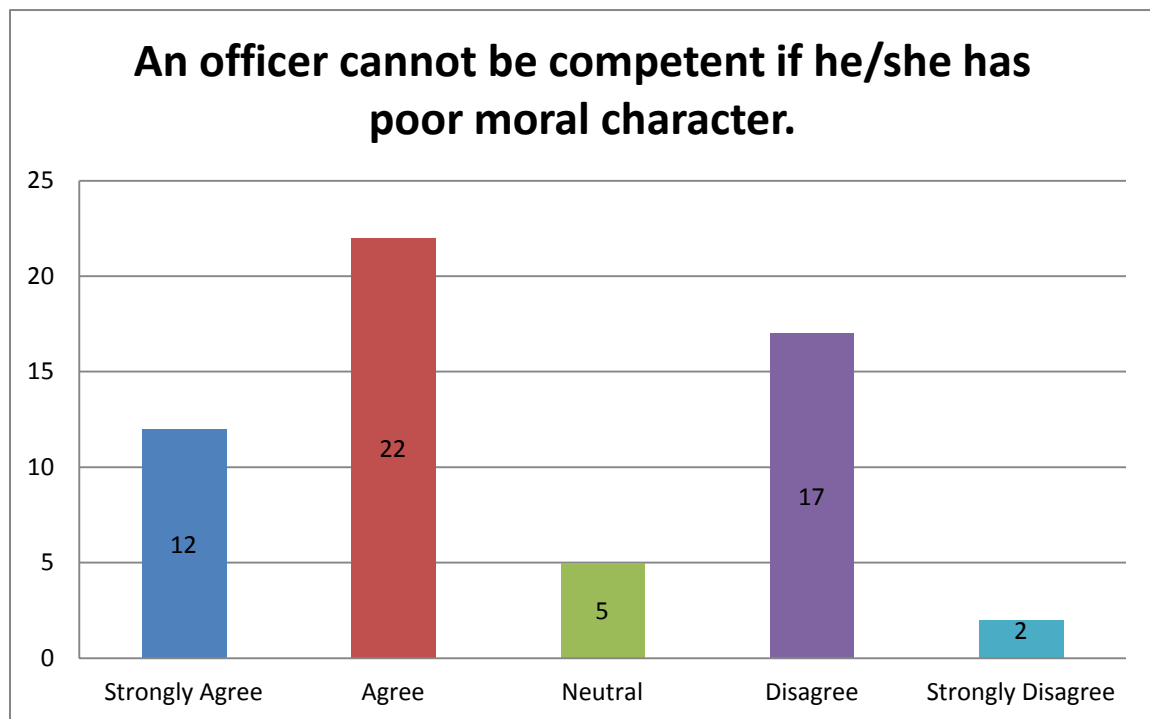
Strongly Agree	12
Agree	30
Neutral	12
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	0
Total Responses	58



An officer cannot be competent if he/she has poor moral character

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

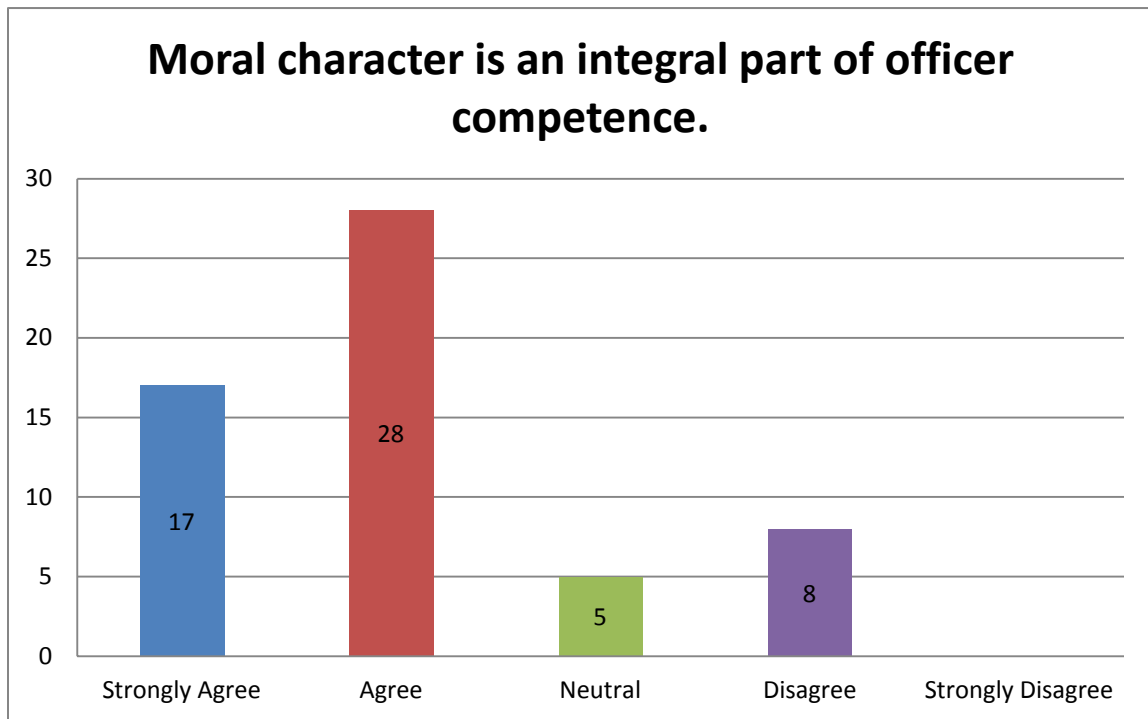
Strongly Agree	12
Agree	22
Neutral	5
Disagree	17
Strongly Disagree	2
Total Responses	58



Moral character is an integral part of officer competence

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

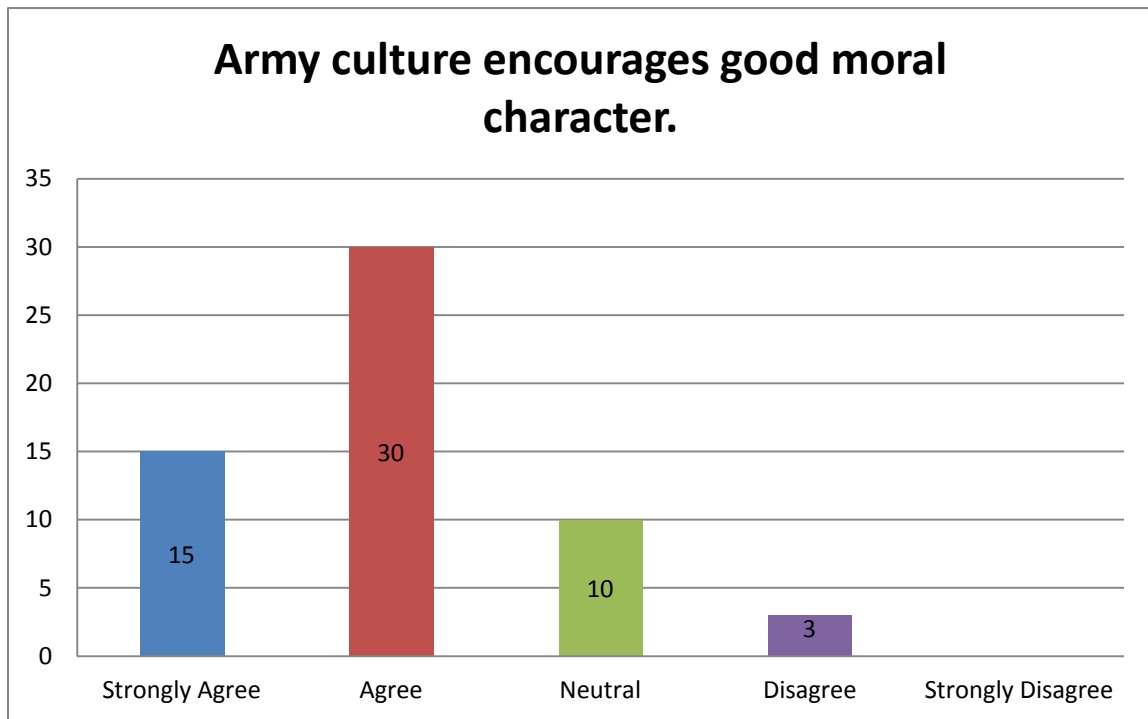
Strongly Agree	17
Agree	28
Neutral	5
Disagree	8
Strongly Disagree	0
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



Army culture encourages good moral character

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

Strongly Agree	15
Agree	30
Neutral	10
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	0
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

Scale 1

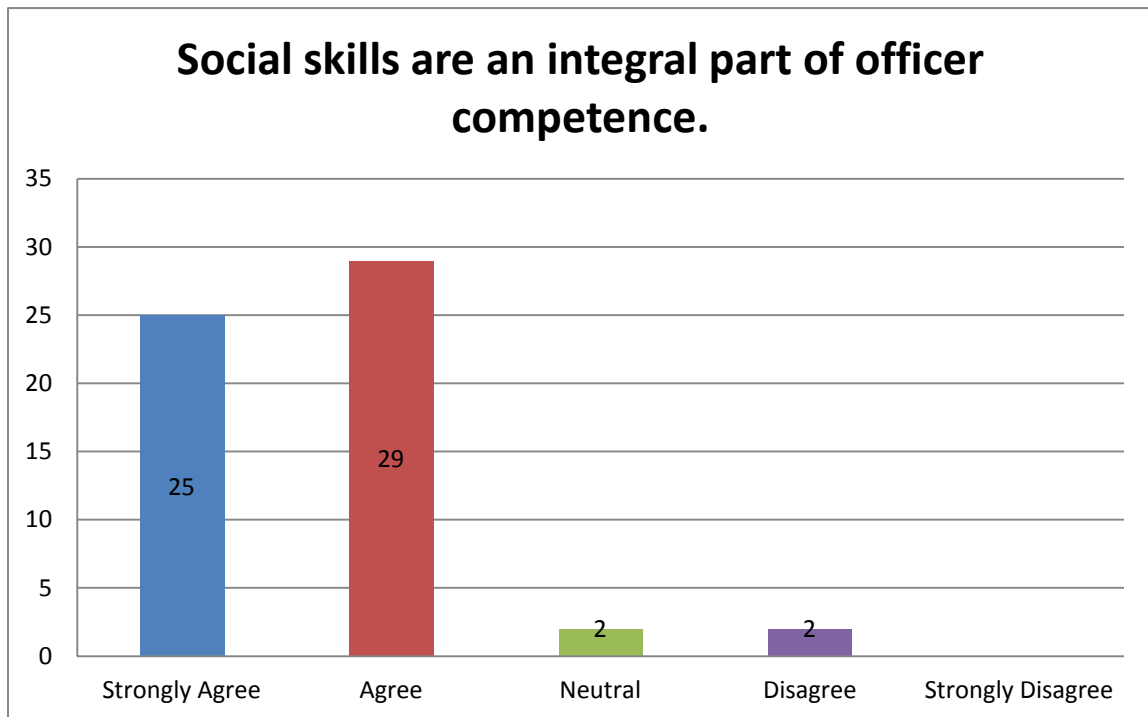
Question Type: Choose one

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Social skills are an integral part of officer competence.	25 43%	29 50%	2 3%	2 3%	0 0%	58
Army culture values interpersonal tact.	9 16%	30 52%	7 12%	11 19%	1 2%	58
An officer cannot be competent if he/she does not build good working relationships.	13 22%	23 40%	8 14%	14 24%	0 0%	58
Army culture encourages tactical proficiency.	24 41%	31 53%	2 3%	1 2%	0 0%	58
Army culture encourages technical proficiency.	21 36%	34 59%	2 3%	1 2%	0 0%	58
Tactical proficiency is an integral part of officer competence.	23 40%	29 50%	5 9%	1 2%	0 0%	58
Total Responses	115	176	26	30	1	348

Social skills are an integral part of officer competence

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

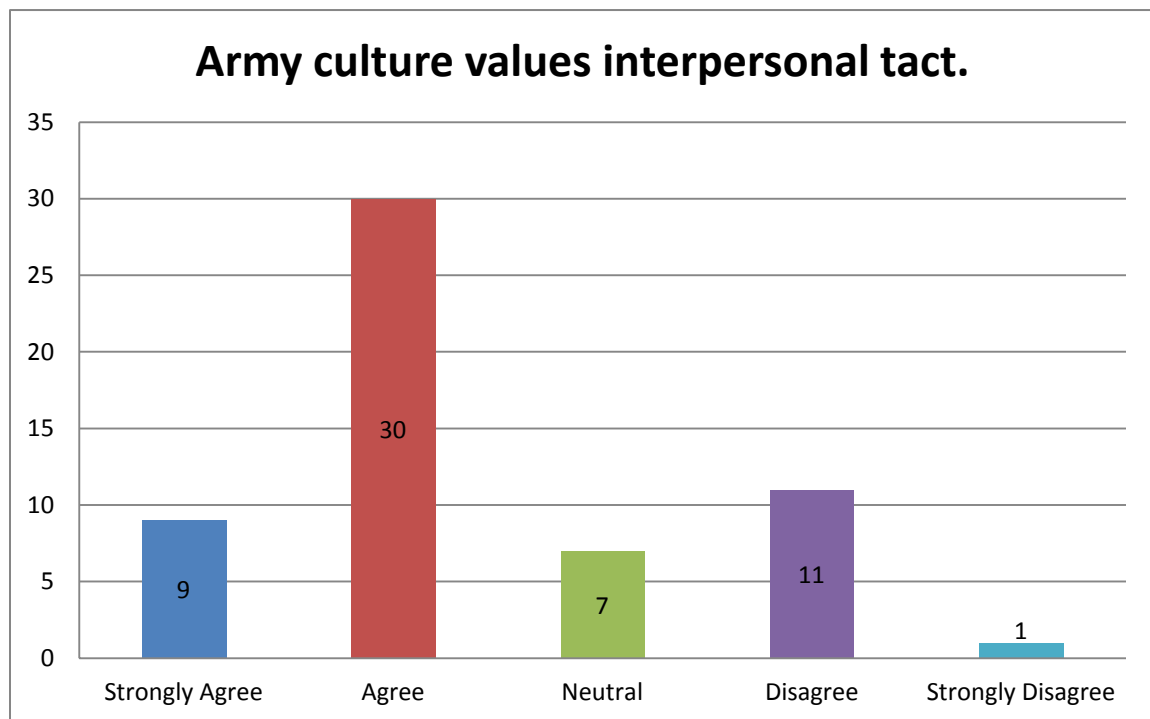
Strongly Agree	25
Agree	29
Neutral	2
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	0
Total Responses	58



Army culture values interpersonal tact

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

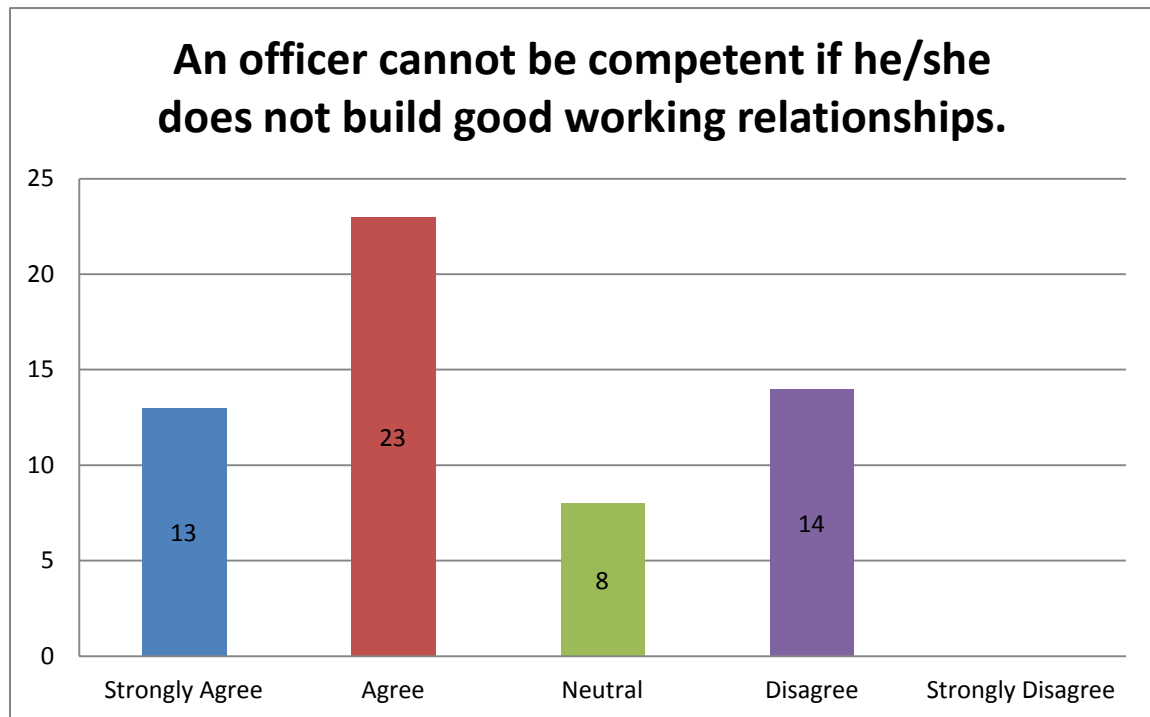
Strongly Agree	9
Agree	30
Neutral	7
Disagree	11
Strongly Disagree	1
Total Responses	58



An officer cannot be competent if he/she does not build good working relationships

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

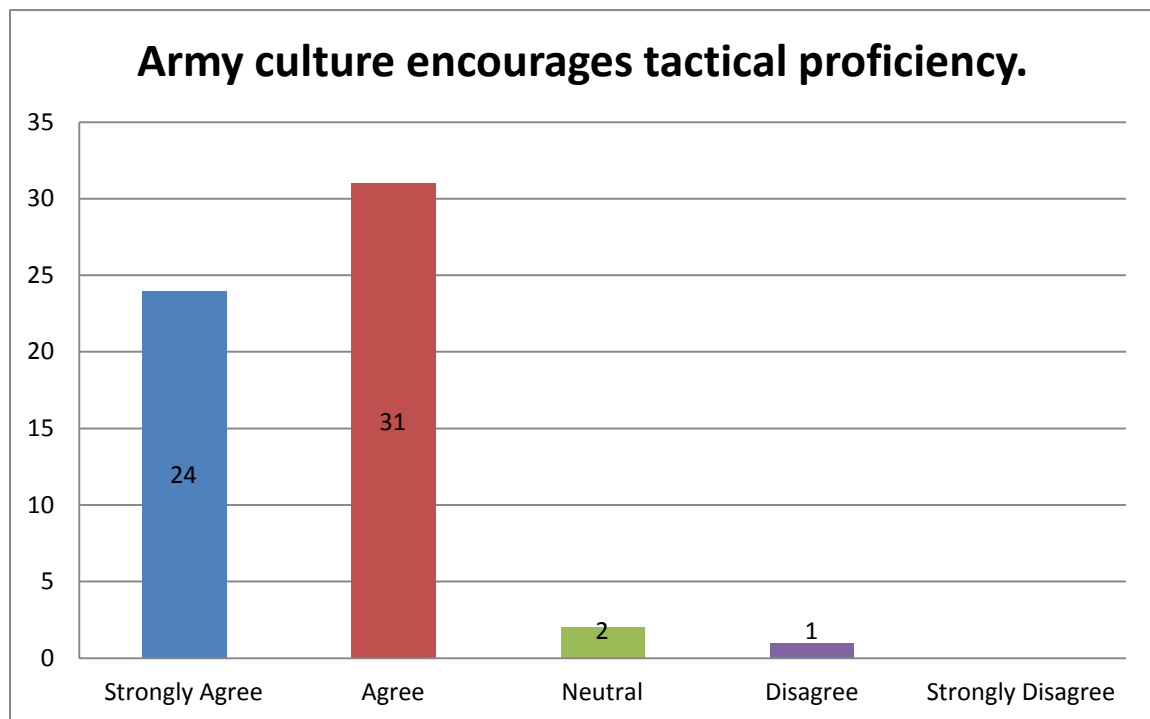
Strongly Agree	13
Agree	23
Neutral	8
Disagree	14
Strongly Disagree	0
Total Responses	58



Army culture encourages tactical proficiency

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

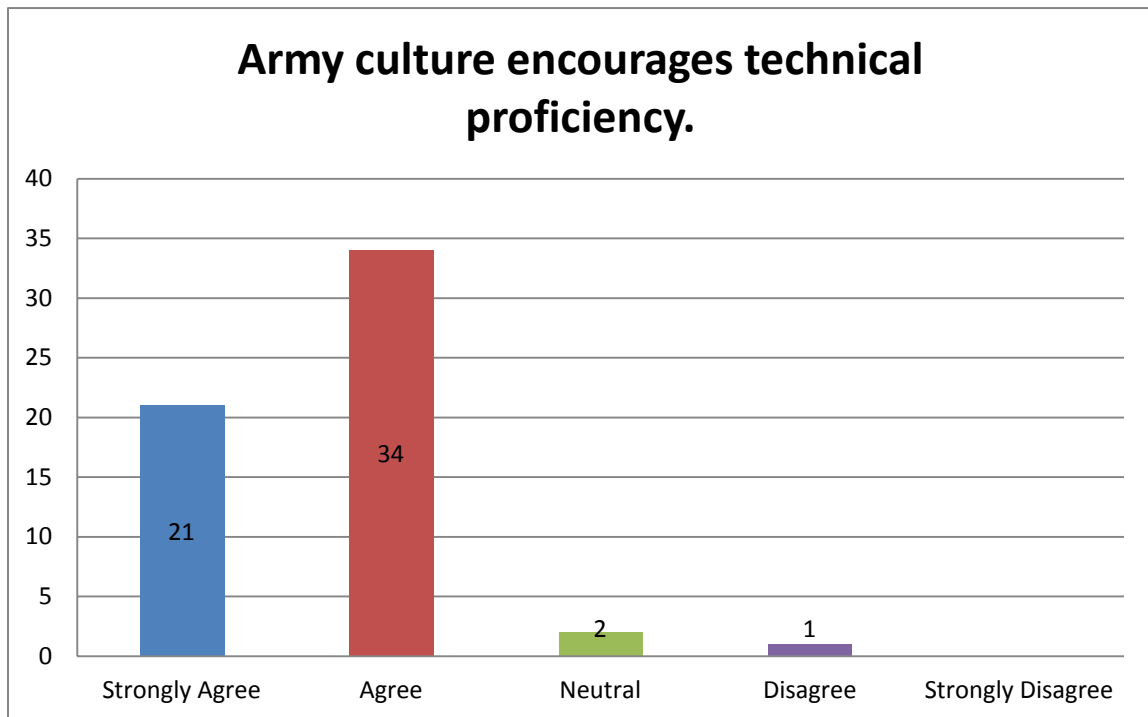
Strongly Agree	24
Agree	31
Neutral	2
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0
Total Responses	58



Army culture encourages technical proficiency

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

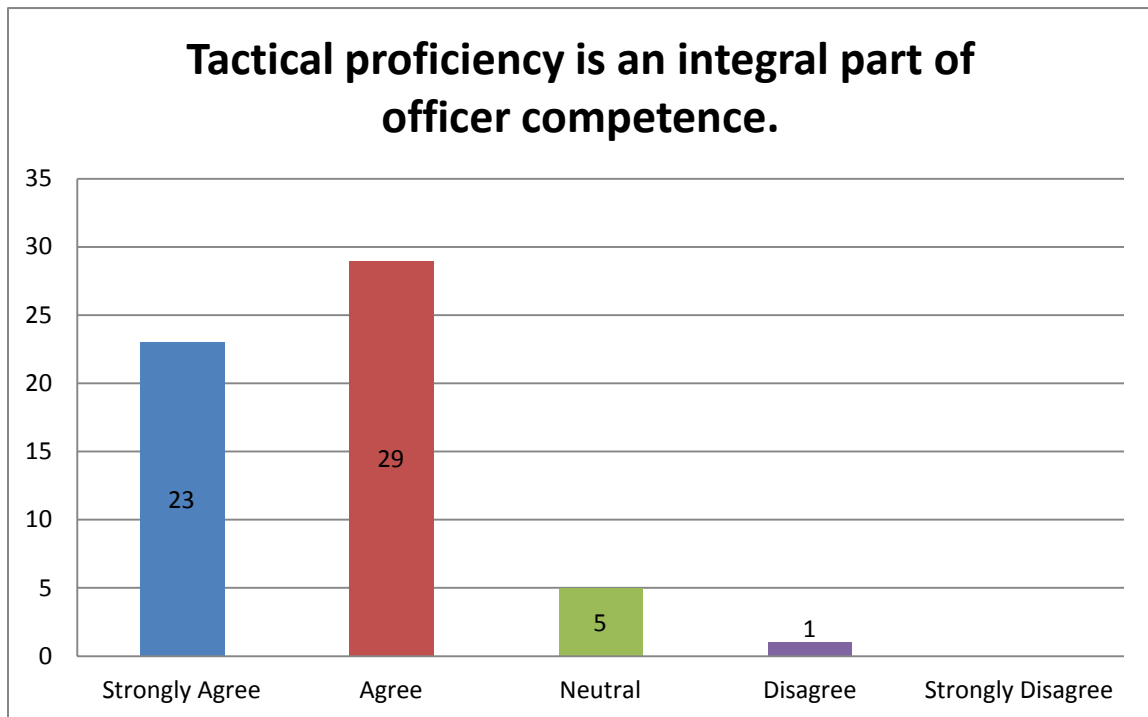
Strongly Agree	21
Agree	34
Neutral	2
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



Tactical proficiency is an integral part of officer competence

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

Strongly Agree	23
Agree	29
Neutral	5
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

Scale 1

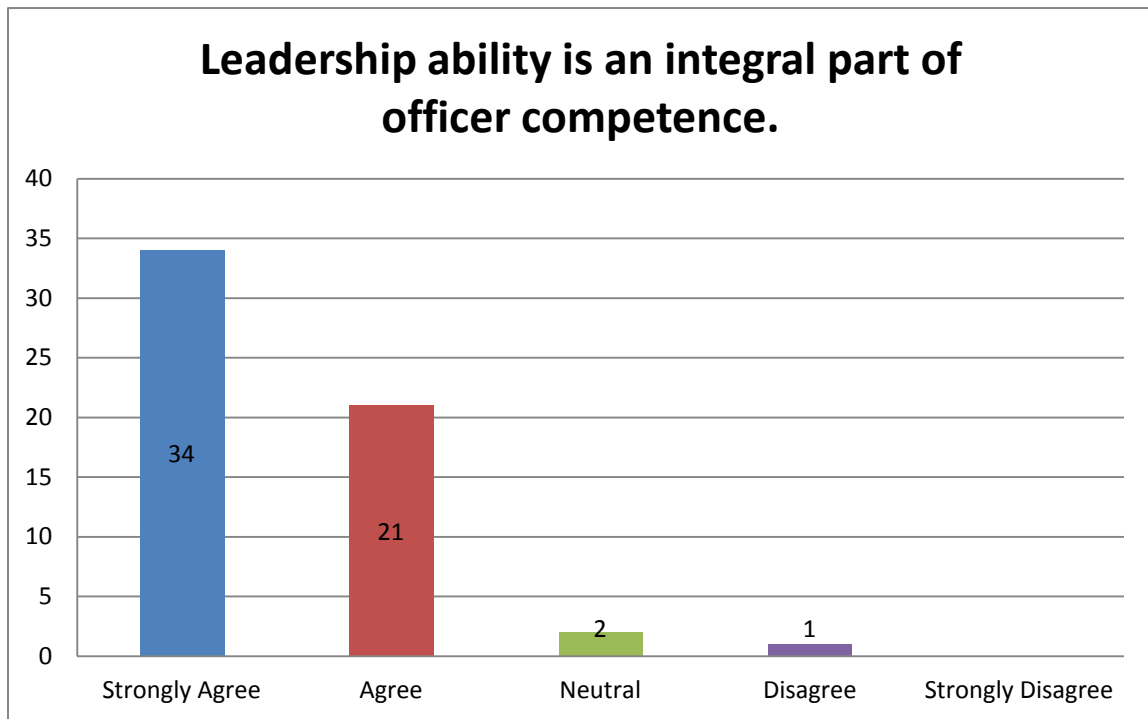
Question Type: Choose one

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Leadership ability is an integral part of officer competence.	34 59%	21 36%	2 3%	1 2%	0 0%	58
Army culture values leadership ability.	33 57%	24 41%	1 2%	0 0%	0 0%	58
Incompetent officers can be trained to achieve competence.	3 5%	34 59%	12 21%	9 16%	0 0%	58
Counseling improves officer competence.	15 26%	30 52%	8 14%	5 9%	0 0%	58
Mentorship improves officer competence.	24 41%	27 47%	5 9%	2 3%	0 0%	58
Total Responses	109	136	28	17	0	290

Leadership ability is an integral part of officer competence.

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

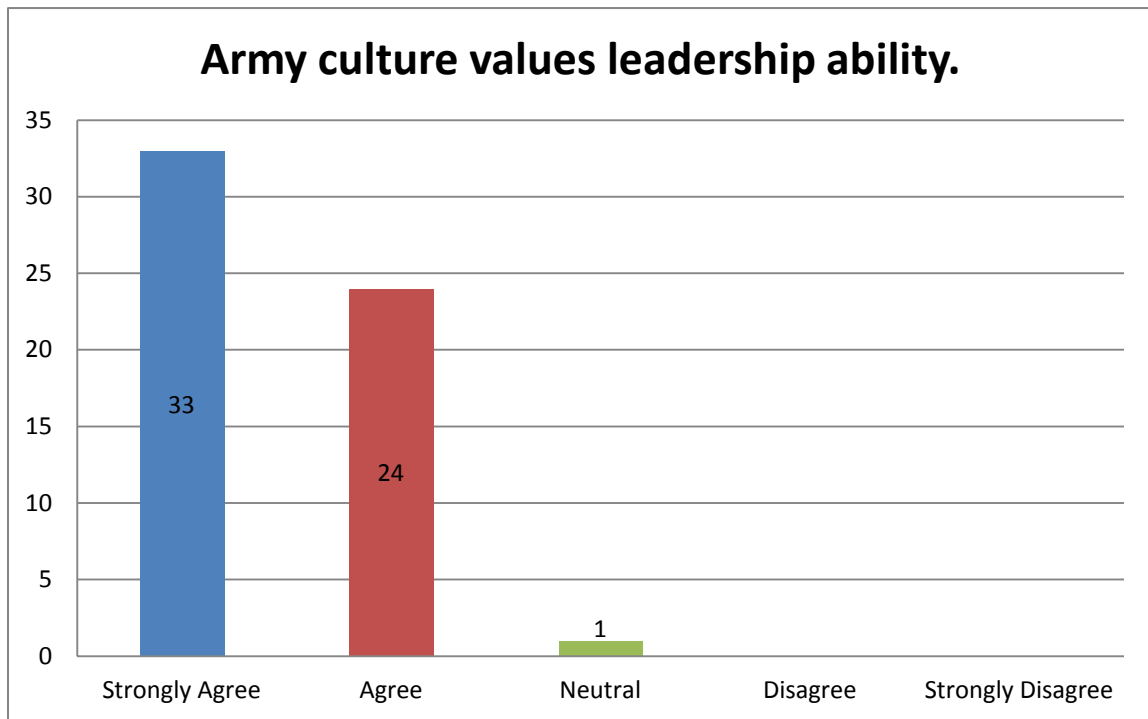
Strongly Agree	34
Agree	21
Neutral	2
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0
Total Responses	58



Army culture values leadership ability

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

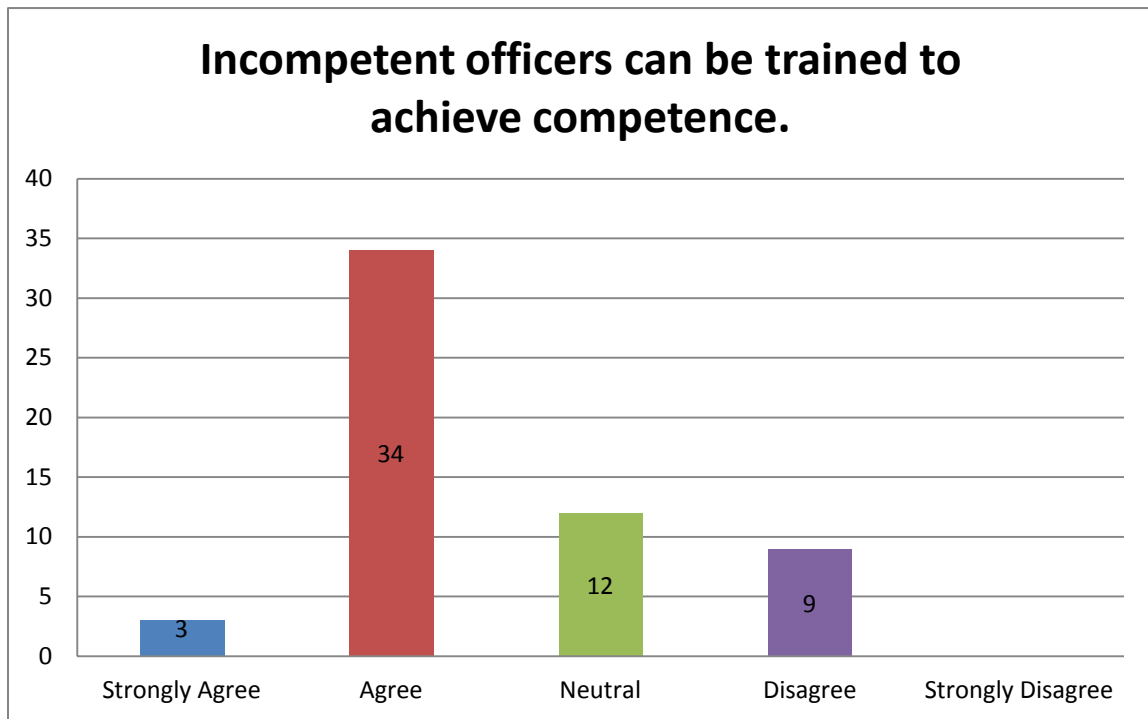
Strongly Agree	33
Agree	24
Neutral	1
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Total Responses	58



Incompetent officers can be trained to achieve competence

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

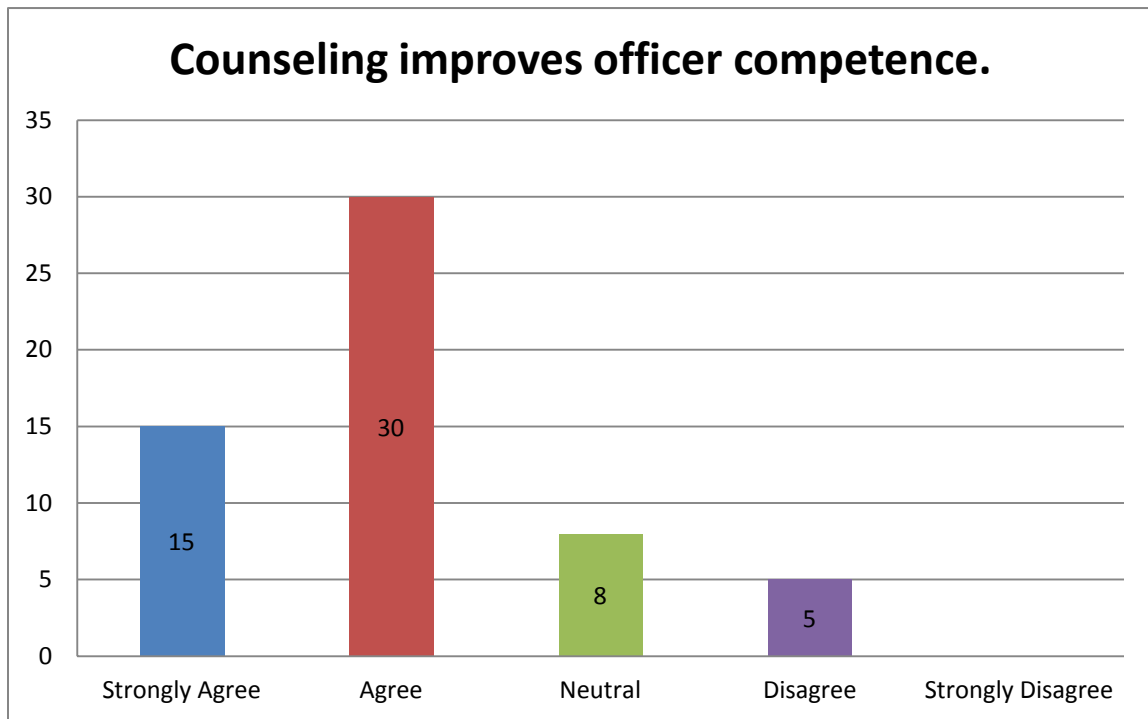
Strongly Agree	3
Agree	34
Neutral	12
Disagree	9
Strongly Disagree	0
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



Counseling improves officer competence.

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

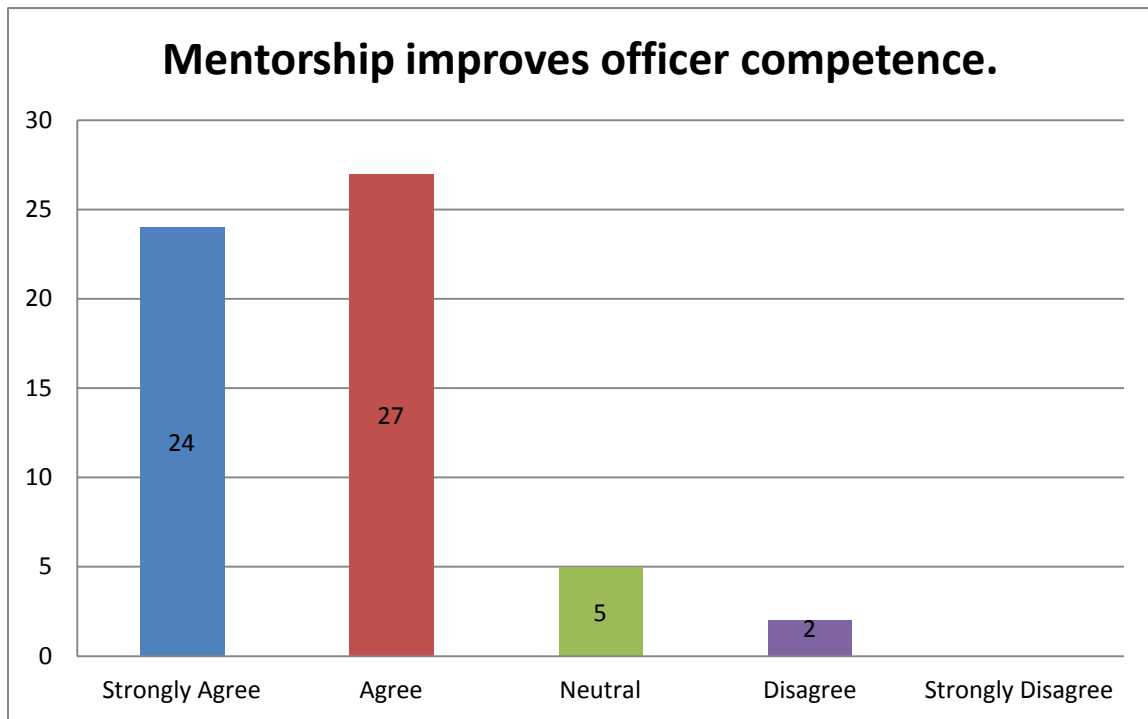
Strongly Agree	15
Agree	30
Neutral	8
Disagree	5
Strongly Disagree	0
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



Mentorship improves officer competence.

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

Strongly Agree	24
Agree	27
Neutral	5
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	0
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Scale 1

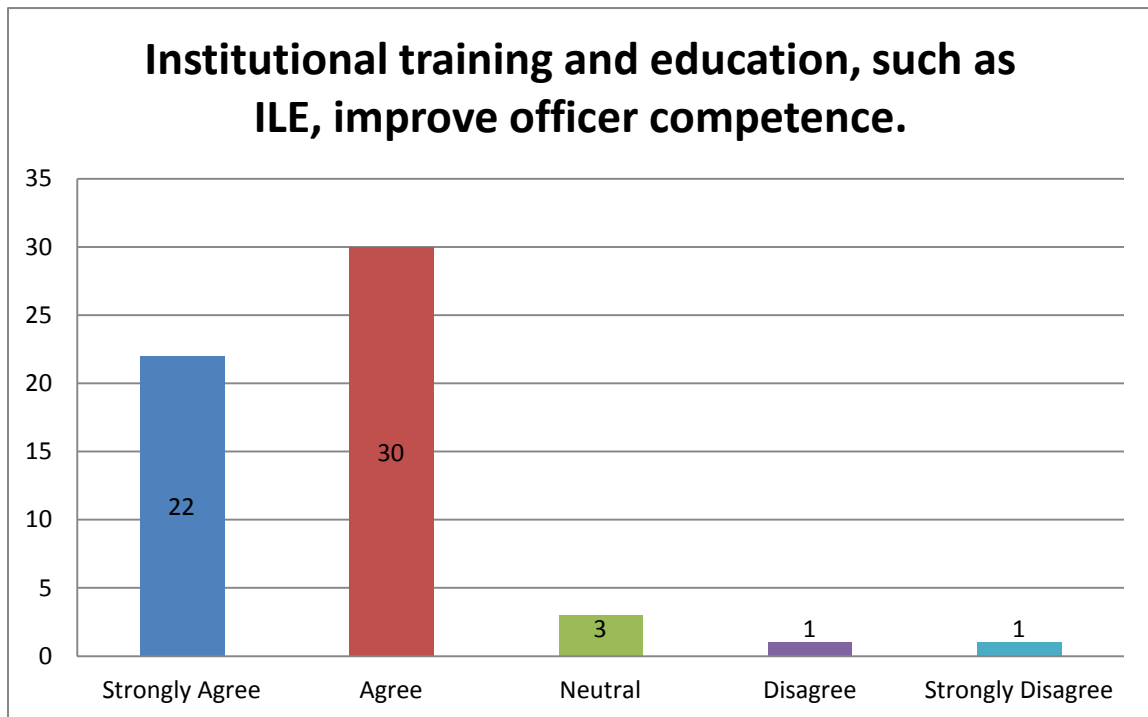
Question Type: Choose one

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Institutional training and education, such as ILE, improve officer competence.	22 39%	30 53%	3 5%	1 2%	1 2%	57
Organizational training and education (i.e. home station training) improve officer competence.	20 34%	36 62%	2 3%	0 0%	0 0%	58
Self-development contributes to officer competence.	29 50%	27 47%	2 3%	0 0%	0 0%	58
Officer competence levels are accurately identified by OERs.	0 0%	17 29%	16 28%	21 36%	4 7%	58
Officer competence levels are accurately identified by their superiors.	0 0%	23 40%	17 29%	15 26%	3 5%	58
Total Responses	71	133	40	37	8	289

Institutional training and education, such as ILE, improve officer competence

Response Rate: 98% (N=57) Question Type: Choose one

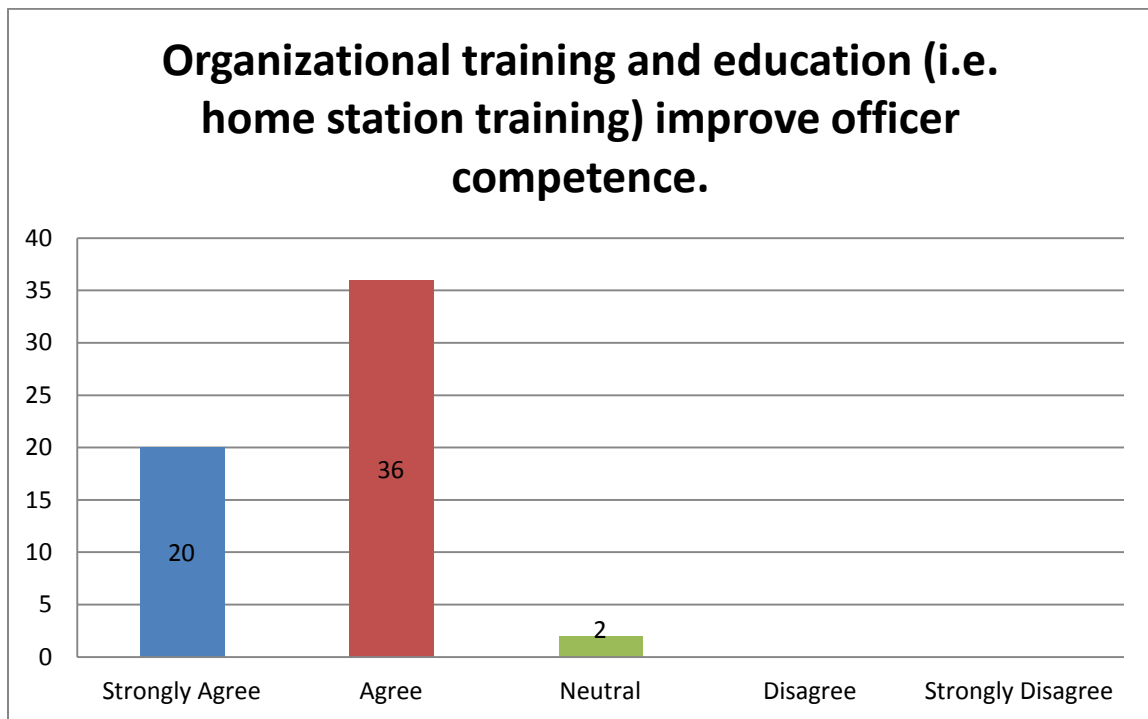
Strongly Agree	22
Agree	30
Neutral	3
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	1
Total Responses	57



Organizational training and education (i.e. home station training)
improve officer competence

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

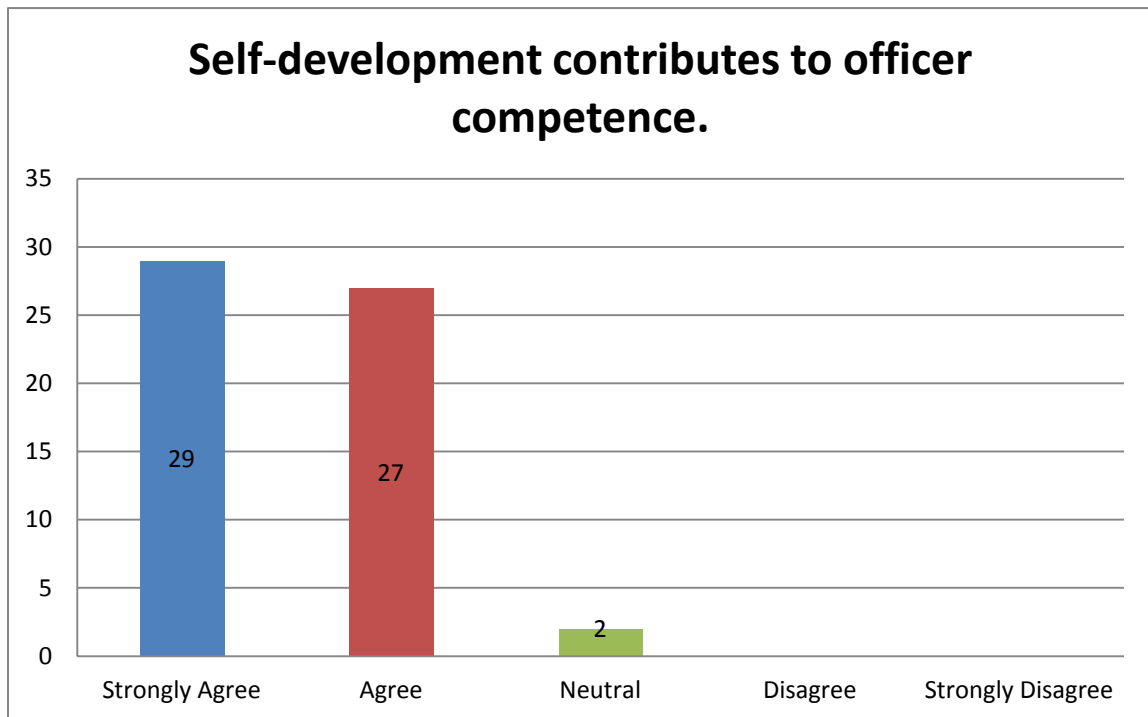
Strongly Agree	20
Agree	36
Neutral	2
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Total Responses	58



Self-development contributes to officer competence

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

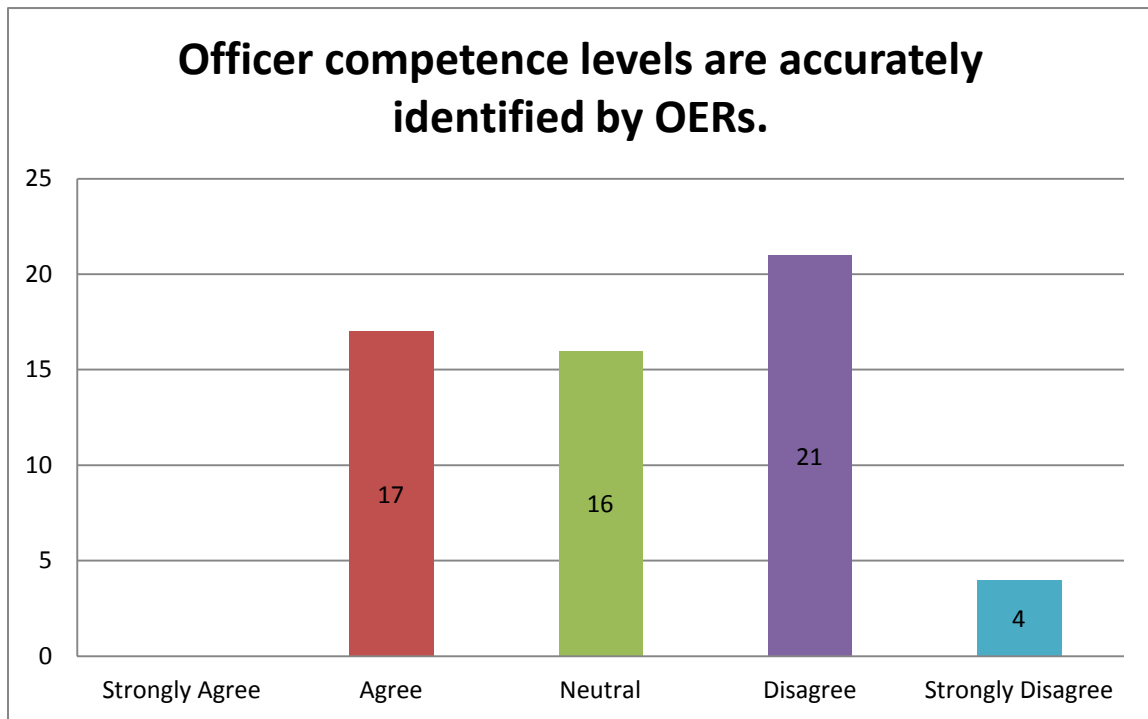
Strongly Agree	29
Agree	27
Neutral	2
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Total Responses	58



Officer competence levels are accurately identified by OERs

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

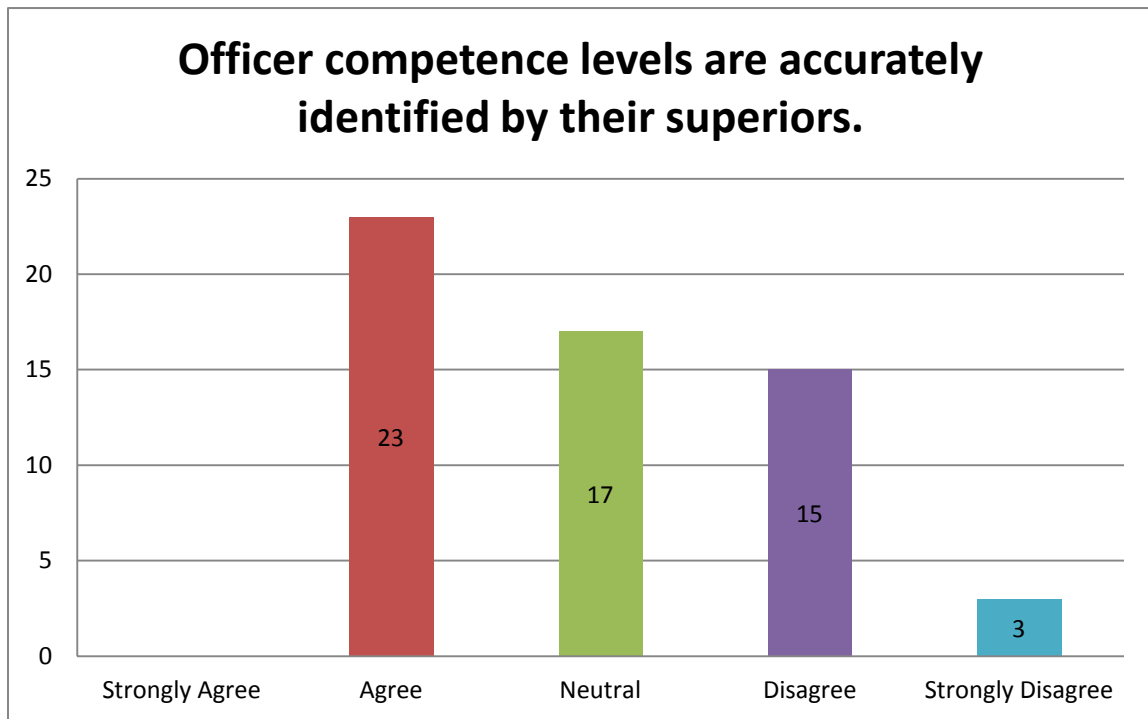
Strongly Agree	0
Agree	17
Neutral	16
Disagree	21
Strongly Disagree	4
Total Responses	58



Officer competence levels are accurately identified by their superiors

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

Strongly Agree	0
Agree	23
Neutral	17
Disagree	15
Strongly Disagree	3
Total Responses	58



Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

Scale 1

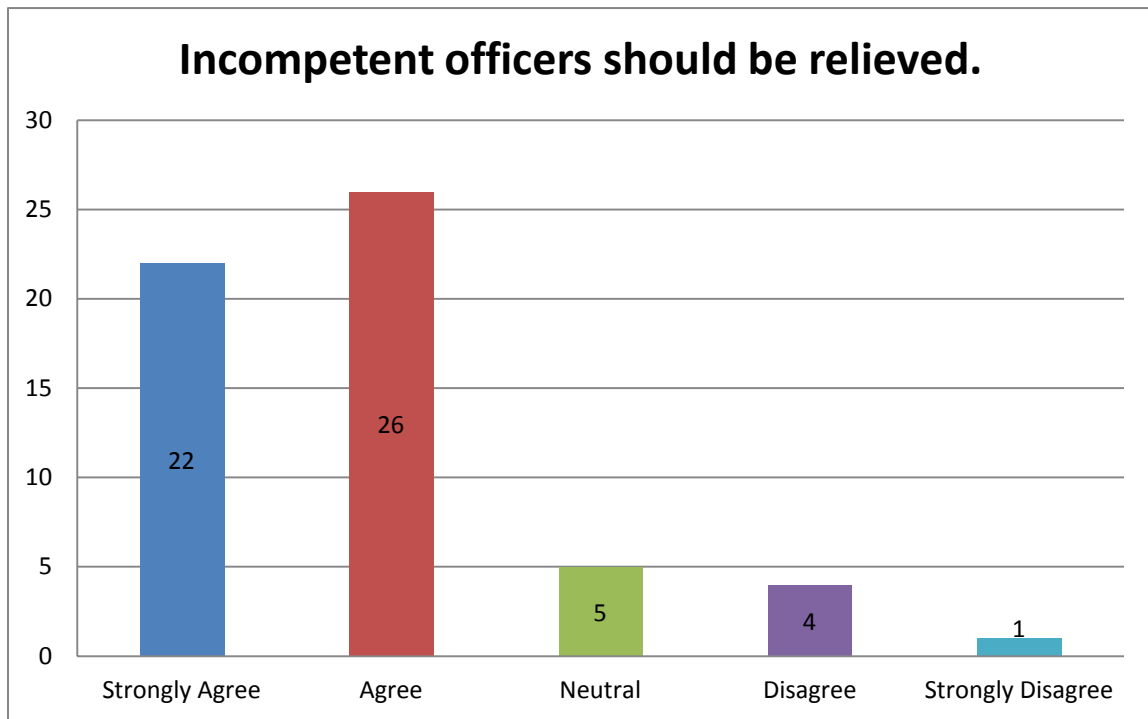
Question Type: Choose one

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Incompetent officers should be relieved.	22 38%	26 45%	5 9%	4 7%	1 2%	58
Incompetent officers get promoted.	12 21%	32 55%	5 9%	4 7%	5 9%	58
The army tolerates incompetent officers.	12 21%	35 60%	7 12%	3 5%	1 2%	58
There are incompetent officers at junior officer levels (LT- CPT).	20 34%	34 59%	4 7%	0 0%	0 0%	58
There are incompetent officers at senior officer levels (MAJ- GO).	20 34%	30 52%	4 7%	3 5%	1 2%	58
Total Responses	86	157	25	14	8	290

Incompetent officers should be relieved

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

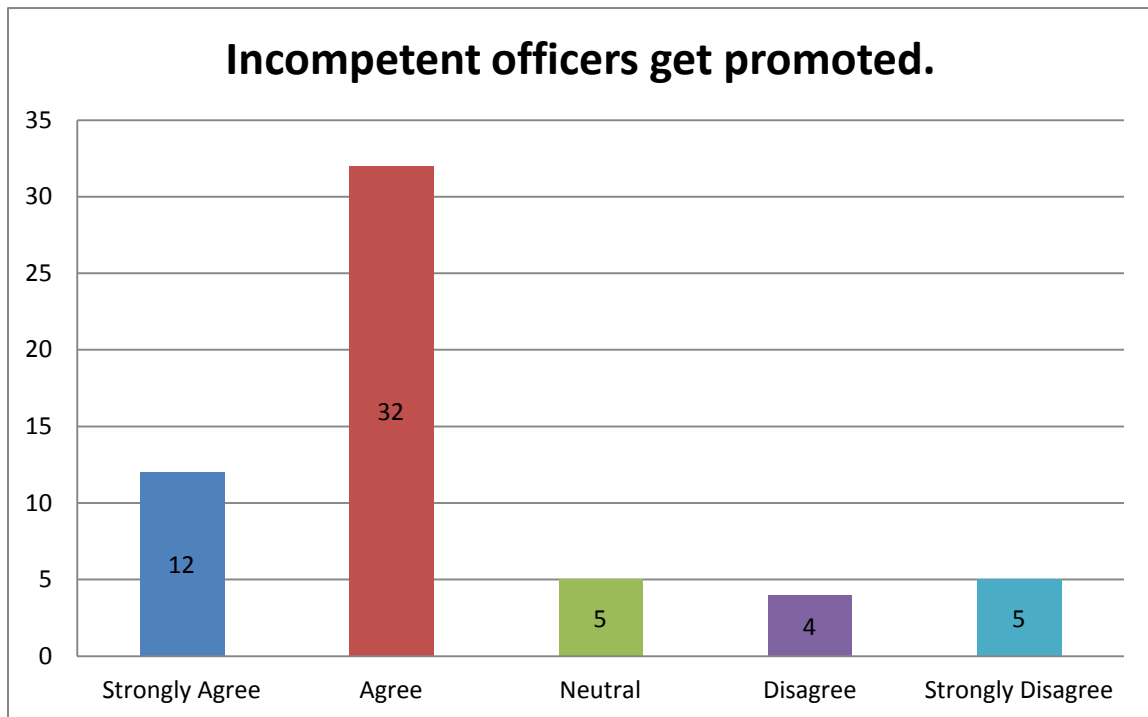
Strongly Agree	22
Agree	26
Neutral	5
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	1
Total Responses	58



Incompetent officers get promoted

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

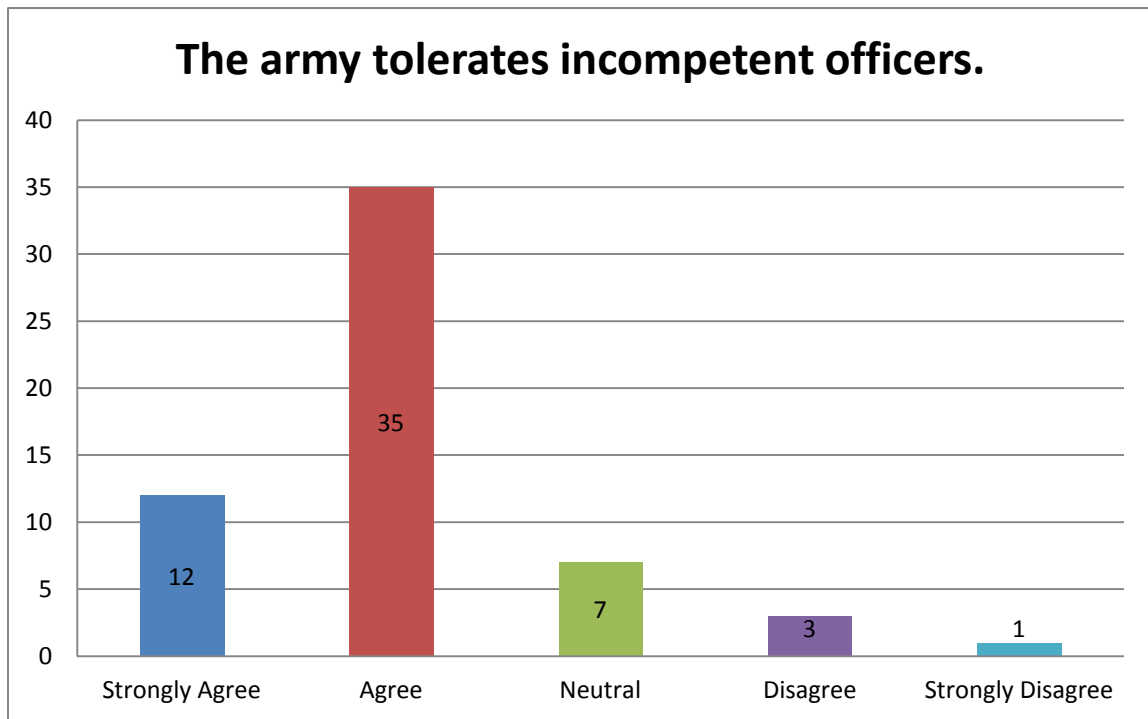
Strongly Agree	12
Agree	32
Neutral	5
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	5
Total Responses	58



The army tolerates incompetent officers

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

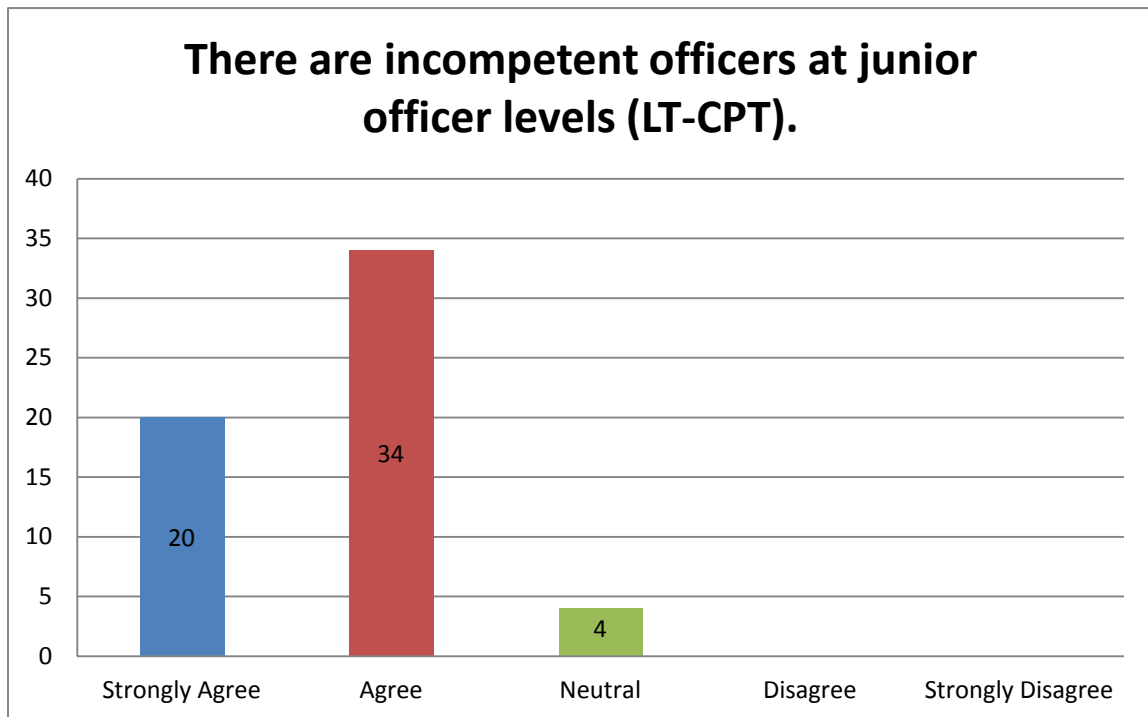
Strongly Agree	12
Agree	35
Neutral	7
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	1
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



There are incompetent officers at junior officer levels (LT-CPT)

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

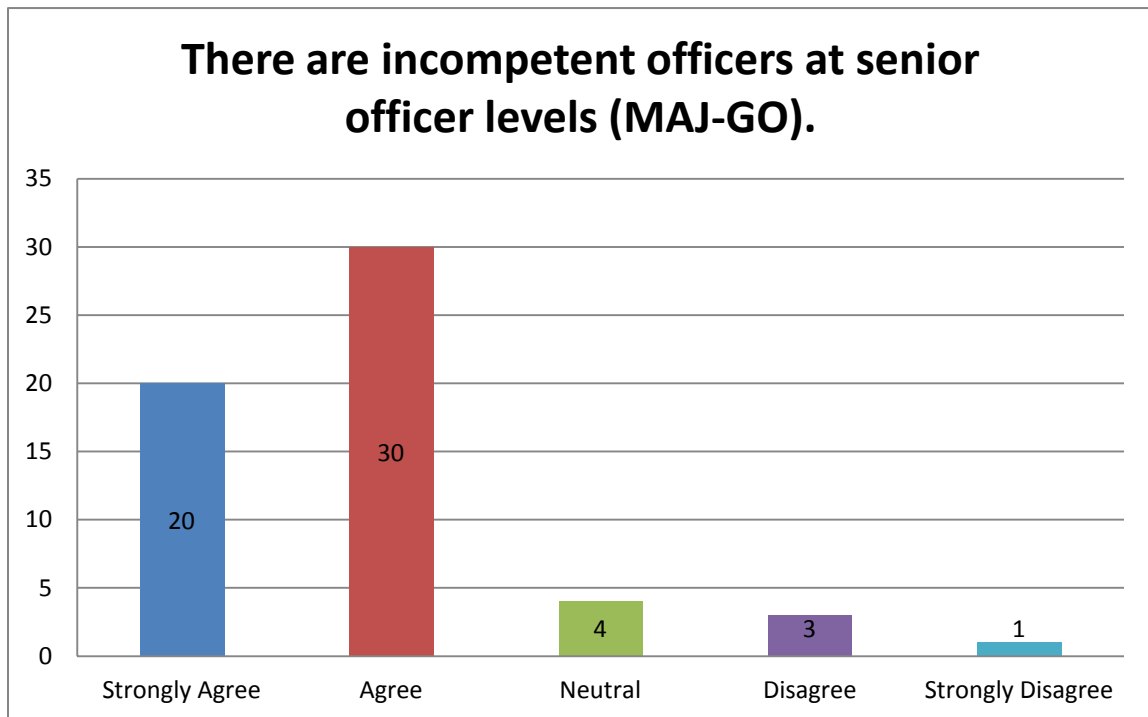
Strongly Agree	20
Agree	34
Neutral	4
Disagree	0
Strongly Disagree	0
Total Responses	58



There are incompetent officers at senior officer levels (MAJ-GO)

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

Strongly Agree	20
Agree	30
Neutral	4
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	1
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

Scale 1

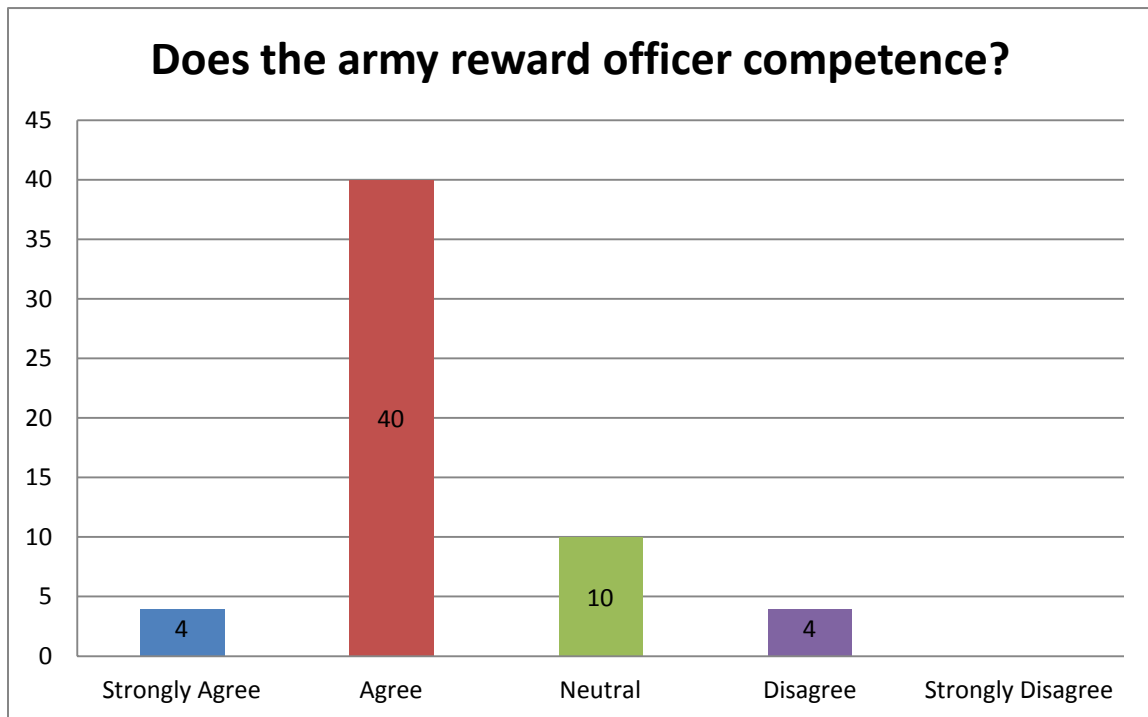
Question Type: Choose one

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
Does the army reward officer competence?	4 7%	40 69%	10 17%	4 7%	0 0%	58
Does the army foster officer competence?	8 14%	36 62%	10 17%	4 7%	0 0%	58
Does the army promote officer competence? (In the classical sense of the word "promote" not referring to rank promotions.)	8 14%	40 69%	6 10%	4 7%	0 0%	58
Does army culture encourage officer competence?	10 17%	40 69%	7 12%	1 2%	0 0%	58
Does army culture value officer competence?	8 14%	43 74%	6 10%	1 2%	0 0%	58
Total Responses	38	199	39	14	0	290

Does the army reward officer competence?

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

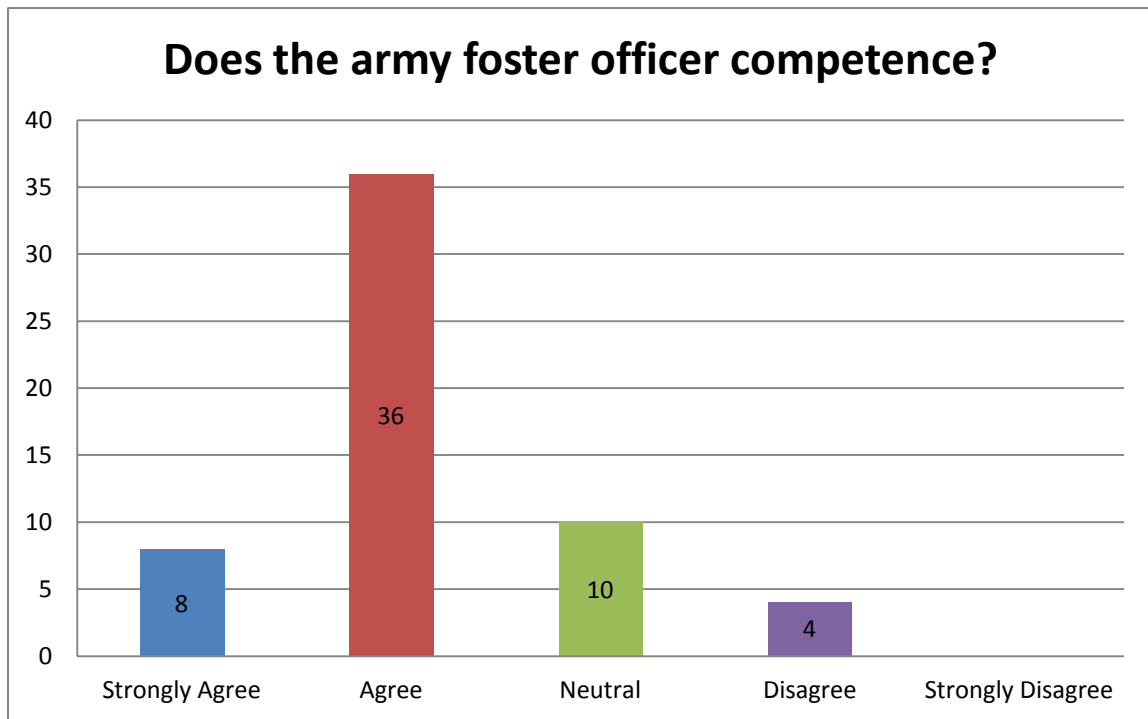
Strongly Agree	4
Agree	40
Neutral	10
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	0
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



Does the army foster officer competence?

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

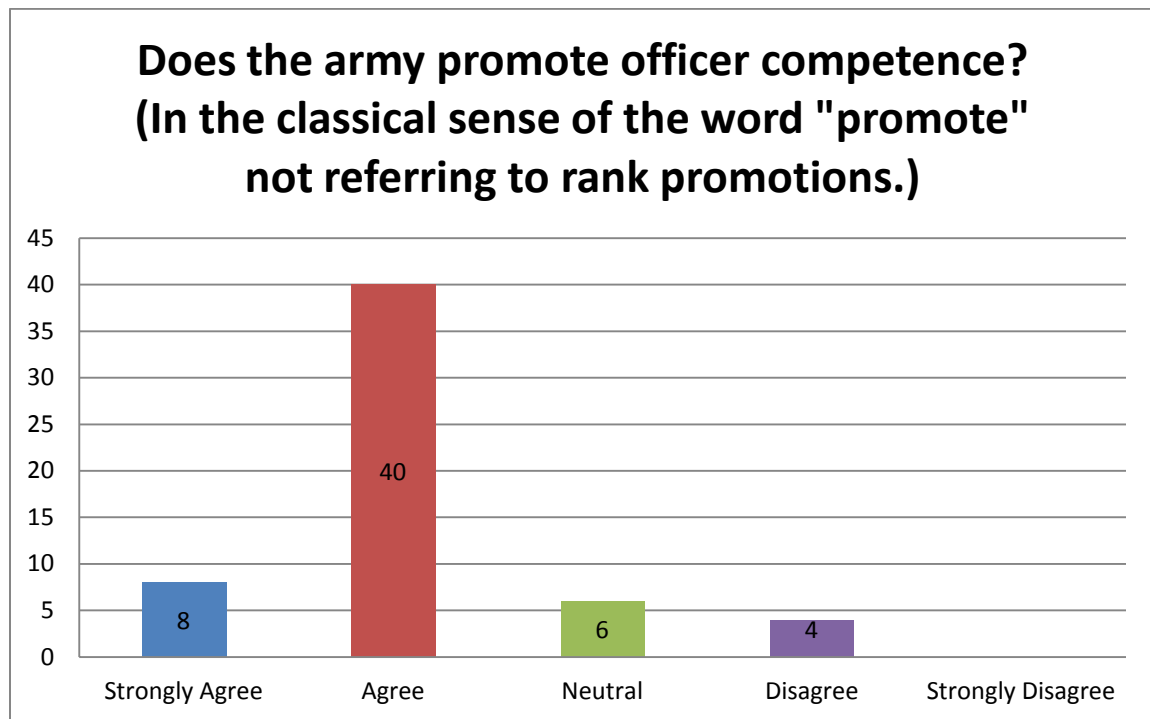
Strongly Agree	8
Agree	36
Neutral	10
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	0
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



Does the army promote officer competence? (In the classical sense of the word "promote" not referring to rank promotions.)

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

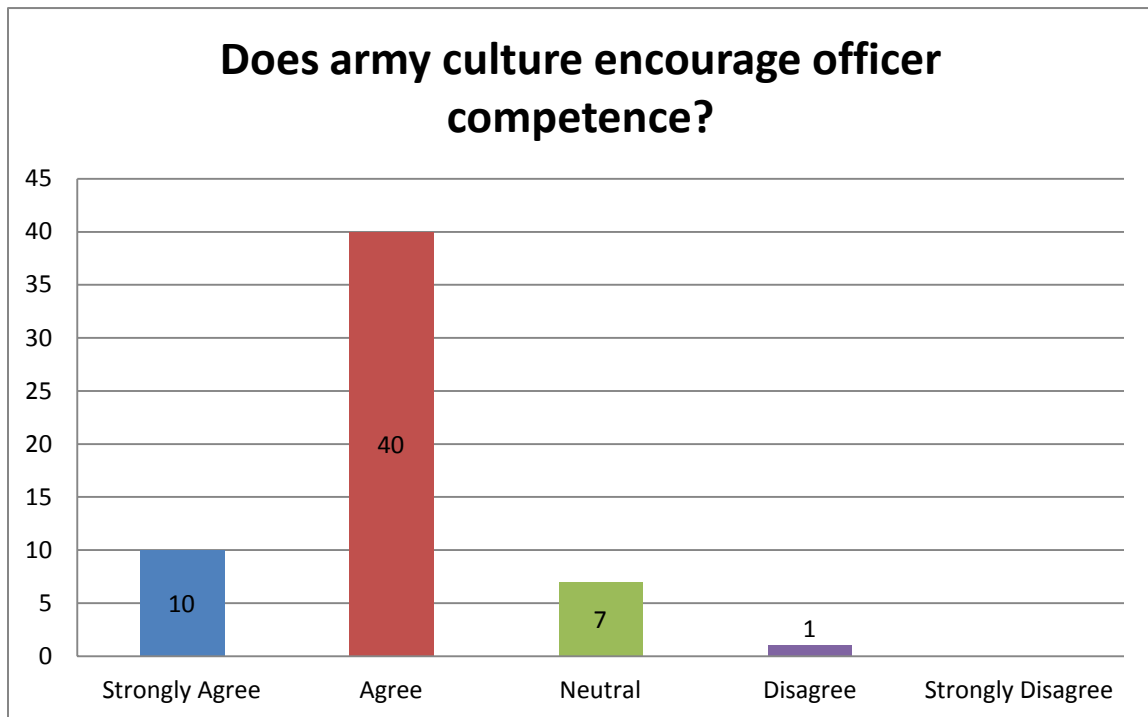
Strongly Agree	8
Agree	40
Neutral	6
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	0
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



Does army culture encourage officer competence?

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

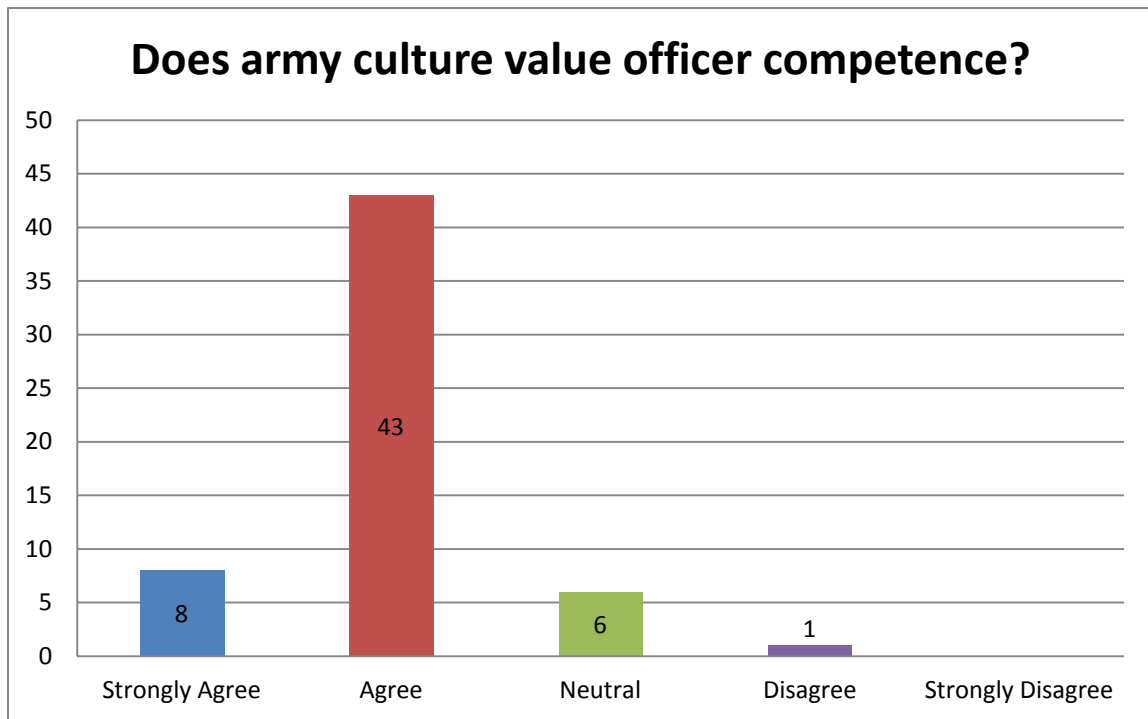
Strongly Agree	10
Agree	40
Neutral	7
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0
<hr/>	
Total Responses	58



Does army culture value officer competence?

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose one

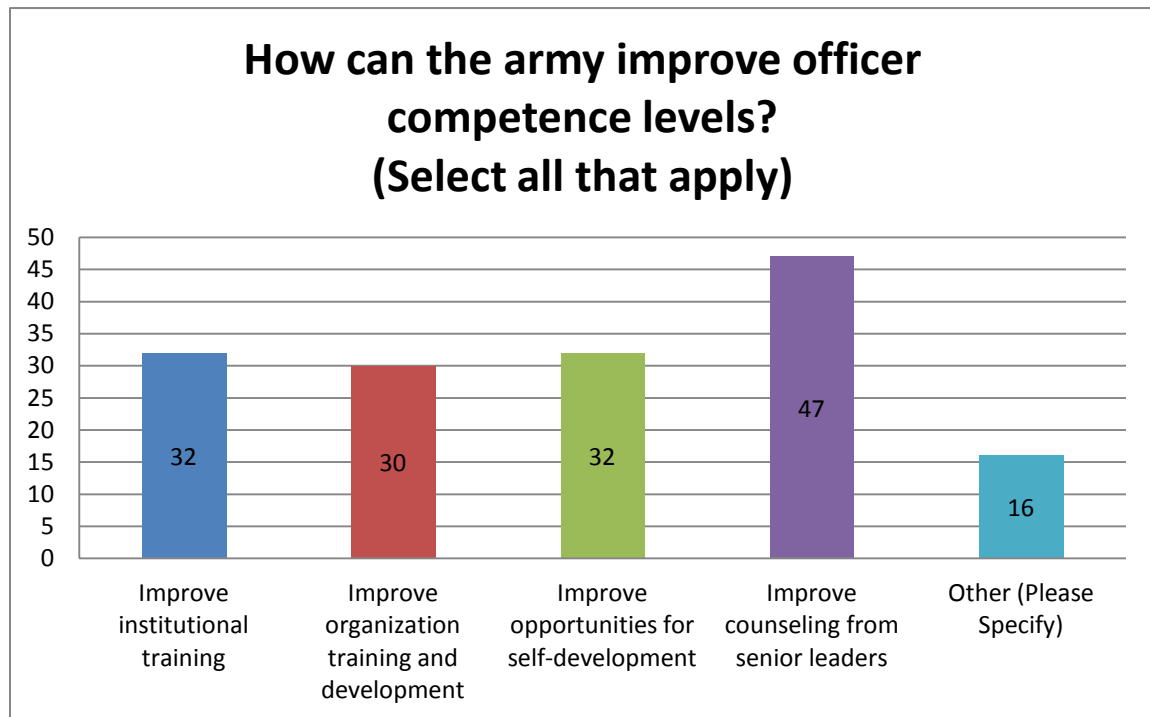
Strongly Agree	8
Agree	43
Neutral	6
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	0
Total Responses	58



How can the army improve officer competence levels? (Select all that apply)

Response Rate: 100% (N=58) Question Type: Choose many

Improve institutional training	32
Improve organization training and development	30
Improve opportunities for self-development	32
Improve counseling from senior leaders	47
Other (Please Specify)	16
Total Responses	157



Other Responses

360 evals that are not determined by the person requesting the assessment
Accessions should be adjusted.
Appropriate counseling and education
Be more selective at entry levels
Change assessment/evaluation systems to truly reflect full spectrum competency...not just mission accomplishment or making rater/sr rater happy
evaluate psychiatric [sic] profile
Hold officers accountable. ILE has been a joke when it comes to this. I have witnessed several students do absolutely ZERO preparation for class, stand on the sidelines during exercises and will still graduate. Complete fail!
Honest evaluations
Honest feedback from superiors [sic] and them being able to make the hard call to tell a junior officer they are not cutting it.
improve mentoring
improve selection of officers
Measure and monitor officer performance (proficiency [sic] tests may be a method for this)
mentorship programs
Promote based on merit rather than time in service/grade.
Select the best officers to attend ILE, but do not punish others for doing it distance learning.
standards

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